COMMON SENSE ABOUT WOMEN

T. W. HIGGINSON.

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BY

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

AUTHOR OF "OLD POST DAYS," "OUT-DOOR PAPERS," ETC., ETC.

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TO

My Little Daughter Margaret.

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COMMON SENSE ABOUT WOMEN.

PHYSIOLOGY.

"*But, before and after being a mother, one is a human being; and neither the motherly nor the wifely destination can overbalance or replace the human, but must become its means, not its end.*"—J. P. F. RICHTER: Levana, § 89.

I.

TOO MUCH NATURAL HISTORY.

LORD MELBOURNE, speaking of the fine ladies in London who were fond of talking about their ailments, used to complain that they gave him too much of their natural history. There are a good many writers—usually men—who, with the best intentions, discuss woman as if she had merely a physical organization, and as if she existed only for one object, the production and rearing of children. Against this some protest may be well made.

Doubtless there are few things more important to a community than the health of its women. The Sandwich Island proverb says:—

> "If strong is the frame of the mother,
> The son will give laws to the people."

And, in nations where all men give laws, all men need mothers of strong frames.

Moreover, there is no harm in admitting that all the rules of organization are imperative; that soul and body, whether of man or woman, are made in harmony, so that each part of our nature must accept the limitations of the other. A man's soul may yearn to the stars; but so long as the body cannot jump so high, he must accept the body's veto. It is the same with any veto interposed in advance by the physical structure of woman. Nobody objects to this general principle. It is only when clerical gentlemen or physiological gentlemen undertake to go a step farther, and put in that veto on their own responsibility, that it is necessary to say, "Hands off, gentlemen! Precisely because women are women, they, not you, are to settle that question."

One or two points are clear. Every specialist is liable to overrate his own speciality; and the man who thinks of woman only as a wife and mother is apt to forget, that, before she was either of these, she was a human being. "Women, as such," says an able writer, "are constituted for purposes of maternity and the continuation of mankind." Undoubtedly, and so were men, as such, constituted for paternity. But very much depends on what relative im-

portance we assign to the phrase, "as such." Even an essay so careful, so moderate, and so free from coarseness, as that here quoted, suggests, after all, a slight one-sidedness,—perhaps a natural reaction from the one-sidedness of those injudicious reformers who allow themselves to speak slightingly of "the merely animal function of child-bearing." Higher than either—wiser than both put together—is that noble statement with which Jean Paul begins his fine essay on the education of girls in "Levana." "Before being a wife or mother, one is a human being; and neither motherly nor wifely destination can overbalance or replace the human, but must become its means, not end. As above the poet, the painter, or the hero, so above the mother, does the human being rise pre-eminent."

Here is sure anchorage. We can hold to this. And, fortunately, all the analogies of nature sustain this position. Throughout nature the laws of sex rule everywhere; but they rule a kingdom of their own, always subordinate to the greater kingdom of the vital functions. Every creature, male or female, finds in its sexual relations only a subordinate part of its existence. The need of food, the need of exercise, the joy of living, these come first, and absorb the bulk of its life, whether the individual be male

or female. This *Antiope* butterfly, that flits at this moment past my window,—the first of the season,—spends almost all its existence in a form where the distinction of sex lies dormant: a few days, I might almost say a few hours, comprise its whole sexual consciousness, and the majority of its race die before reaching that epoch. The law of sex is written absolutely through the whole insect world. Yet everywhere it is written as a secondary and subordinate law. The life which is common to the sexes is the principal life; the life which each sex leads, "as such," is a minor and subordinate thing.

The same rule pervades nature. Two riders pass down the street before my window. One rides a horse, the other a mare. The animals were perhaps foaled in the same stable, of the same progenitors. They have been reared alike, fed alike, trained alike, ridden alike; they need the same exercise, the same grooming; nine-tenths of their existence are the same, and only the other tenth is different. Their whole organization is marked by the distinction of sex; but, though the marking is ineffaceable, the distinction is not the first or most important fact.

If this be true of the lower animals, it is far more true of the higher. The mental and moral laws of

the universe touch us first and chiefly as human beings. We eat our breakfasts as human beings, not as men and women; and it is the same with nine-tenths of our interests and duties in life. In legislating or philosophizing for woman, we must neither forget that she has an organization distinct from that of man, nor must we exaggerate the fact. Not "first the womanly and then the human," but first the human and then the womanly, is to be the order of her training.

II.

DARWIN, HUXLEY, AND BUCKLE.

WHEN any woman, old or young, asks the question, Which among all modern books ought I to read first? the answer is plain. She should read Buckle's lecture before the Royal Institution upon "The Influence of Woman on the Progress of Knowledge." It is one of two papers contained in a thin volume called "Essays by Henry Thomas Buckle." As a means whereby a woman may become convinced that her

sex has a place in the intellectual universe, this little essay is almost indispensable. Nothing else takes its place.

Darwin and Huxley seem to make woman simply a lesser man, weaker in body and mind,—an affectionate and docile animal, of inferior grade. That there is any aim in the distinction of the sexes, beyond the perpetuation of the race, is nowhere recognized by them, so far as I know. That there is anything in the intellectual sphere to correspond to the physical difference; that here also the sexes are equal yet diverse, and the natural completion and complement of the other,—this neither Huxley nor Darwin explicitly recognizes. And with the utmost admiration for their great teachings in other ways, I must think that here they are open to the suspicion of narrowness.

Huxley wrote in "The Reader," in 1864, a short paper called "Emancipation—Black and White," in which, while taking generous ground in behalf of the legal and political position of woman, he yet does it pityingly, *de haut en bas*, as for a creature hopelessly inferior, and so heavily weighted already by her sex, that she should be spared all further trials. Speaking through an imaginary critic, who seems to represent himself, he denies "even the natural equality of the sexes," and declares "that in every excellent charac-

ter, whether mental or physical, the average woman is inferior to the average man, in the sense of having that character less in quantity and lower in quality." Finally he goes so far as "to defend the startling paradox that even in physical beauty, man is the superior." He admits that for a brief period of early youth the case may be doubtful, but claims that after thirty the superior beauty of man is unquestionable. Thus reasons Huxley; the whole essay being included in his volume of "Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews."

Darwin's best statements on the subject may be found in his "Descent of Man." He is, as usual, more moderate and guarded than Huxley. He says, for instance: "It is generally admitted that with women the powers of intuition, or rapid preception, and perhaps of imitation, are more strongly marked than in man; but some, at least, of these faculties are characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilization." Then he passes to the usual assertion that man has thus far attained to a higher eminence than woman. "If two lists were made of the most eminent men and women in poetry, painting, sculpture, music,—comprising composition and performance,—history, science, and philosophy, with half a dozen names under each subject, the two

lists would not bear comparison." But the obvious answer, that nearly every name on his list, upon the masculine side, would probably be taken from periods when woman was excluded from any fair competition, —this he does not seem to recognize at all. Darwin, of all men, must admit that superior merit generally arrives later, not earlier, on the scene; and the question for him to answer is, not whether woman equalled man in the first stages of the intellectual "struggle for life," but whether she is not gaining on him now.

If, in spite of man's enormous advantage in the start, woman has already overtaken his very best performances in several of the highest intellectual departments,—as, for instance, prose fiction and dramatic representation,—then it is mere dogmatism in Mr. Darwin to deny that she may yet do the same in other departments. We in this generation have actually seen this success achieved by Rachel and Ristori in the one art, by "George Sand" and "George Eliot" in the other. Woman is, then, visibly gaining on man, in the sphere of intellect; and, if so, Mr. Darwin, at least, must accept the inevitable inference.

But this is arguing the question on the superficial facts merely. Buckle goes deeper, and looks to principles. That superior quickness of women, which Darwin dismisses so lightly as something belonging

to savage epochs, is to Buckle the sign of a quality which he holds essential, not only to literature and art, but to science itself. Go among ignorant women, he says, and you will find them more quick and intelligent than equally ignorant men. A woman will usually tell you the way in the street more readily than a man can; a woman can always understand a foreigner more easily; and Dr. Currie says in his letters, that when a labourer and his wife came to consult him, he always got all the information from the wife. Buckle illustrates this at some length, and points out that a woman's mind is by its nature deductive and quick; a man's mind, inductive and slow; that each has its value, and that science profoundly needs both.

"I will endeavour," he says, "to establish two propositions. First, that women naturally prefer the deductive method to the inductive. Secondly, that women, by encouraging in men deductive habits of thought, have rendered an immense though unconscious service to the progress of science, by preventing scientific investigators from being as exclusively inductive as they would otherwise be."

Then he shows that the most important scientific discoveries of modern times—as of the laws of gravitation by Newton, the law of the forms of crystals

by Haüy, and the metamorphosis of plants by Goethe —were all essentially the results of that *à priori* or deductive method, "which, during the last two centuries, Englishmen have unwisely despised." They were all the work, in a manner, of the imagination,—of the intuitive or womanly quality of mind. And nothing can be finer or truer than the words in which Buckle predicts the benefits that are to come from the intellectual union of the sexes for the work of the future. "In that field which we and our posterity have yet to traverse, I firmly believe that the imagination will effect quite as much as the understanding. Our poetry will have to re-enforce our logic, and we must feel quite as much as we must argue. Let us, then, hope that the imaginative and emotional minds of one sex will continue to accelerate the great progress by acting upon and improving the colder and harder minds of the other sex. By this coalition, by this union of different faculties, different tastes, and different methods, we shall go on our way with the greater ease."

III.

WHICH IS THE STRONGER?

WHAT is strength,—the brute hardness of iron, or the more delicate strength of steel? Which is the stronger,—the physical frame that can strike the harder blow, or that which can endure the greater strain and yet last longer? "Man can lift a heavier weight," says a writer on physiology, "but woman can watch more enduringly at the bedside of her sick child." The strain upon the system of all women who have borne and reared children is as great in its way as that upon the system of the carpenter or the wood-chopper; and the power to endure it is as properly to be called strength.

Again, which is the stronger in the domain of will,—the man who carries his points by energy and command, or the woman who carries hers by patience and persuasion? the man in the household who leads and decides, or the woman who foresees, guards, manages? the mother of the family, who puts the commas and semicolons in her children's lives, as Jean Paul Richter says, or the father who puts in the colons and periods? It may be hard to say which

type of strength is the more to be admired, but it is clear that they are both genuine types.

One grows tired of hearing young men who can do nothing but row, or swing dumb-bells, and are thrown wholly "off their training" by the loss of a night's sleep, speak contemptuously of the physical weakness of a woman who can watch with a sick person half a dozen nights together. It is absurd to hear a man who is prostrated by a single reverse in business speak of being "encumbered" with a wife who can perhaps alter the habits of a lifetime more easily than he can abandon his half-dollar cigars. It is amusing to read the criticisms of languid and graceful masculine essayists, on the want of vigorous intellect in the sex that wrote "Aurora Leigh" and "Middlemarch" and "Consuelo."

It may be that a man's strength is not a woman's, or a woman's strength that of a man. I am arguing for equivalence, not identity. The greater part played in the phenomena of a woman's strength by sensibility and impulse and variations and tears—this does not affect the matter. What I have never been able to see is, that woman as such is, in the long-run and tried by all the tests, a weaker being than man. And it would seem that any man, in proportion as he lives longer and sees more of life,

must have the conceit taken out of him by actual contact with some woman—be she mother, sister, wife, daughter, or friend—who is not only as strong as himself in all substantial regards, but it may be, on the whole, a little stronger.

IV.

THE SPIRIT OF SMALL TYRANNY.

WHEN Mr. John Smauker and the Bath footmen invited Sam Weller to their "swarry," consisting of a boiled leg of mutton, each guest had some expression of contempt and wrath for the humble little greengrocer who served them,—"in the true spirit," Dickens says, "of the very smallest tyranny." The very fact that they were subject to being ordered about in their own persons gave them a peculiar delight in issuing tyrannical orders to others: just as sophomores in college torment freshmen because other sophomores once teased the present tormentors themselves; and Irishmen denounce the Chinese for underbidding them in the labour market, precisely as they were themselves denounced by native-born

Americans thirty years ago. So it has sometimes seemed to me that the men whose own positions and claims are really least commanding are those who hold most resolutely that women should be kept in their proper place of subordination.

A friend of mine maintains the theory that men large and strong in person are constitutionally inclined to do justice to women, as fearing no competition from them in the way of bodily strength; but that small and weak men are apt to be vehemently opposed to anything like equality in the sexes. He quotes in defence of his theory the big soldier in London who justified himself for allowing his little wife to chastise him, on the ground that it pleased her and did not hurt him; and, on the other hand, cites the extreme domestic tyranny of the dwarf Quilp. He declares that in any difficult excursion among woods and mountains, the guides and the able-bodied men are often willing to have women join the party, while it is sure to be opposed by those who doubt their own strength or are reluctant to display their weakness. It is not necessary to go so far as my friend goes; but many will remember some fact of this kind, making such theories appear not quite so absurd as at first.

Thus it seems, from the "Life and Letters" of

Sydney Dobell, that he was opposed both to woman suffrage and woman authorship, believing the movement for the former to be a "blundering on to the perdition of womanhood." It appears that against all authorship by women his convictions yearly grew stronger, he regarding it as "an error and an anomaly." It seems quite in accordance with my friend's theory to hear, after this, that Sydney Dobell was slight in person and a lifelong invalid; nor is it surprising, on the same theory, that his poetry took no deep root, and that it will not be likely to survive long, except, perhaps, in his weird ballad of "Ravelston." But he represents a large class of masculine intellects, of secondary and mediocre quality, whose opinions on this subject are not so much opinions as instinctive prejudices against a competitor who may turn out their superior. Whether they know it, or not, their aversion to the authorship of women is very much like the conviction of a weak pedestrian, that women are not naturally fitted to take long walks; or the opinion of a man whose own accounts are in a muddle, that his wife is constitutionally unfitted to understand business.

It is a pity to praise either sex at the expense of the other. The social inequality of the sexes was not produced so much by the voluntary tyranny of

man as by his great practical advantage at the outset; human history necessarily beginning with a period when physical strength was sole ruler. It is unnecessary, too, to consider in how many cases women may have justified this distrust; and may have made themselves as obnoxious as Horace Walpole's maids of honour, whose coachman left his savings to his son on condition that he should never marry a maid of honour. But it is safe to say that on the whole the feeling of contempt for women, and the love to exercise arbitrary power over them, is the survival of a crude impulse which the world is outgrowing, and which is in general least obvious in the manliest men. That clear and able writer, Walter Bagehot, well describes "the contempt for physical weakness and for women which marks early society. The non-combatant population is sure to fare ill during the ages of combat. But these defects, too, are cured or lessened; women have now marvellous means of winning their way in the world; and mind without muscle has far greater force than muscle without mind."*

* "Physics and Politics," p. 79.

V.

"THE NOBLE SEX."

A HIGHLY educated American woman of my acquaintance once employed a French tutor in Paris to assist her in teaching Latin to her little grandson. The Frenchman brought with him a Latin grammar, written in his own language, with which my friend was quite pleased, until she came to a passage relating to the masculine gender in nouns, and claiming grammatical precedence for it on the ground that the male sex is the noble sex,—"*le sexe noble.*" "Upon that," she said, "I burst forth in indignation, and the poor teacher soon retired. But I do not believe," she added, "that the Frenchman has the slightest conception up to this moment, of what I could find in that phrase to displease me."

I do not suppose he could. From the time when the Salic Law set French women aside from the royal succession, on the ground that the kingdom of France was "too noble to be ruled by a woman," the claim of nobility has been all on one side. The State has strengthened the Church in this theory, the

Church has strengthened the State; and the result of all is, that French grammarians follow both these high authorities. When even the good Père Hyacinthe teaches that the husband is to direct the conscience of his wife, precisely as the father directs that of his child, what higher philosophy can you expect of any Frenchman than to maintain the claims of "*le sexe noble*"?

We see the consequence, even among the most heterodox Frenchmen. Rejecting all other precedents and authorities, the poor Communists still held to this. Consider, for instance, this translation of a marriage contract under the Commune, which lately came to light in a trial reported in the *Gazette des Tribunaux*:—

FRENCH REPUBLIC.

The citizen Anet, son of Jean Louis Anet, and the *citoyenne* Maria Saint; she engaged to follow the said citizen everywhere and to love him always.—ANET. MARIA SAINT.

Witnessed by the under-mentioned citizen and *citoyenne*.—FOURIER. LAROCHE.

PARIS, *April* 22, 1871.

What a comfortable arrangement is this! Poor *citoyenne* Maria Saint, even when all human laws have suspended their action, still holds by her grammar, still must annex herself to *le sexe noble*. She still must follow citizen Anet as the feminine

pronoun follows the masculine, or as a verb agrees with its nominative case in number and in person. But with what a lordly freedom from all obligation does citizen Anet, representative of this nobility of sex, accept the allegiance! The citizeness may "follow him," certainly,—so long as she is not in the way,—and she must "love him always;" but he is not bound. Why should he be? It would be quite ungrammatical.

Yet, after all is said and done, there is a brutal honesty in this frank subordination of the woman according to the grammar. It has the same merit with the old Russian marriage consecration: "Here, wolf, take thy lamb," which at least put the thing clearly, and made no nonsense about it. I do not know that anywhere in France the wedding ritual is now so severely simple as that, but I know that in some rural villages of that country the bride is still married in a mourning gown. I should think she would be.

VI.

THE LIMITATIONS OF SEX.

ARE there any inevitable limitations of sex?

Some reformers, apparently, think that there are not, and that the best way to help woman is to deny the fact of limitations. But I think the great majority of reformers would take a diffierent ground, and would say that the two sexes are mutually limited by nature. They would doubtless add that this very fact is an argument for the enfranchisement of woman: for, if woman is a mere duplicate of man, man can represent her; but if she has traits of her own, absolutely distinct from his, then he cannot represent her, and she must have a voice and a vote of her own.

To this last body of believers I belong. I think hat all legal or conventional obstacles should be removed, which debar woman from determining for herself, as freely as man determines, what the real limitations of sex are, and what the merely conventional restriction. But, when all is said and done, there is no doubt that plenty of limitations will remain on both sides.

That man has his limitations, is clear. No matter how finely organized a man may be, how sympathetic, how tender, how loving, there is yet a barrier, never to be passed, that separates the most precious part o the woman's kingdom from him. All the wondrous world of motherhood, with its unspeakable delights, its holy of holies, remains forever unknown by him ; he may gaze, but never enter. That halo of pure devotion, which makes a Madonna out of so many a poor and ignorant woman, can never touch his brow. Many a man loves children more than many a woman : but, after all, it is not he who has borne them ; to that peculiar sacredness of experience he can never arrive. But never mind whether the loss be a great one or a small one : it is distinctly a limitation ; and to every loving mother it is a limitation so important that she would be unable to weigh all the privileges and powers of manhood against this peculiar possession of her child.

Now, if this be true, and if men be thus distinctly limited by the mere fact of sex, can the woman complain that she also should have some natural limitations ? Grant that she should have no unnecessary restrictions ; and that the course of human progress is constantly setting aside, as needless, point after point that was once held essential. Still, if she

finds—as she undoubtedly will find—that natural barriers and hindrances remain at last, and that she can no more do man's whole work in the world than he can do hers, why should she complain? If he can accept his limitations, she must be prepared also to accept hers.

Some of our physiological reformers declare that a girl will be perfectly healthy if she can only be sensibly dressed, and can "have just as much out-door exercise as the boys, and of the same sort, if she choose it." But I have observed that matter a good deal, and have watched the effect of boyish exercise on a good many girls; and I am satisfied that so far from being safely turned loose, as boys can be, they need, for physical health, the constant supervision of wise mothers. Otherwise the very exposure that only hardens the boy may make the girl an invalid for life. The danger comes from a greater sensitiveness of structure,—not weakness, properly so called, since it gives, in certain ways, more power of endurance,—a greater sensitiveness which runs through all a woman's career, and is the expensive price she pays for the divine destiny of motherhood. It is another natural limitation.

No wise person believes in any "reform against Nature," or that we can get beyond the laws of Na-

ture. If I believed the limitations of sex to be inconsistent with woman suffrage, for instance, I should oppose this ; but I do not see why a woman cannot form political opinions by her baby's cradle, as well as her husband in his workshop, while her very love for the child commits her to an interest in good government. Our duty is to remove all the artificial restrictions we can. That done, it will not be hard for man or woman to acquiesce in the natural limitations.

TEMPERAMENT.

Ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετή.—ANTISTHENES in Diogenes Laertius, vi. 1, 5.

"*Virtue in man and woman is the same.*"

VII.

THE INVISIBLE LADY.

THE Invisible Lady, as advertised in all our cities a good many years ago, was a mysterious individual who remained unseen, and had apparently no human organs except a brain and a tongue. You asked questions of her, and she made intelligent answers; but where she was, you could no more discover than you could find the man inside the Automaton Chess-Player. Was she intended as a satire on womankind, or as a sincere representation of what womankind should be? To many men, doubtless, she would have seemed the ideal of her sex, could only her brain and tongue have disappeared like the rest of her faculties. Such men would have liked her almost as well as that other mysterious personage

on the London sign-board, labelled "The Good Woman," and represented by a female figure without a head.

It is not that any considerable portion of mankind actually wishes to abolish woman from the universe. But the opinion dies hard that she is best off when least visible. These appeals which still meet us for "the sacred privacy of woman" are only the Invisible Lady on a larger scale. In ancient Bœotia, brides were carried home in vehicles whose wheels were burned at the door in token that they would never again be needed. In ancient Rome, it was a queen's epitaph, "She stayed at home, and spun,"—*Domum servavit, lanum fecit.* In Turkey, not even the officers of justice can enter the apartments of a woman without her lord's consent. In Spain and Spanish America, the veil replaces the four walls of the house, and is a portable seclusion. To be visible is at best a sign of peasant blood and occupations; to be high-bred is to be invisible.

In the Azores I found that each peasant family endeavoured to secure for one or more of its daughters the pride and glory of living unseen. The other sisters, secure in innocence, tended cattle on lonely mountain-sides, or toiled bare-legged up the steep ascents, their heads crowned with orange-

baskets. The chosen sister was taught to read, to embroider, and to dwell indoors; if she went out it was only under escort, and with her face buried in a hood of almost incredible size, affording only a glimpse of the poor pale cheeks, so unlike the rosy vigour of the damsels on the mountain-side. The girls, I was told, did not covet this privilege of seclusion; but let us be genteel, or die.

Now all that is left of the Invisible Lady among ourselves is only the remnant of this absurd tradition. In the seaside town where I write, ladies usually go veiled in the streets, and so general is the practice that little girls often veil their dolls. They all suppose it to be done for complexion or for ornament; just as people still hang straps on the backs of their carriages, not knowing that it is a relic of the days when footmen stood there and held on. But the veil represents a tradition of seclusion, whether we know it or not; and the dread of hearing a woman speak in public, or of seeing a woman vote, represents precisely the same tradition. It is entitled to no less respect, and no more.

Like all traditions, it finds something in human nature to which to attach itself. Early girlhood, like early boyhood, needs to be guarded and sheltered, that it may mature unharmed. It is monstrous to

make this an excuse for keeping a woman, any more than a man, in a condition of perpetual subordination and seclusion. The young lover wishes to lock up his angel in a little world of her own, where none may intrude. The harem and the seraglio are simply the embodiment of this desire. But the maturer man, and the maturer race, have found that the beloved being should be something more.

After this discovery is made, the theory of the Invisible Lady disappears. It is less of a shock to an American to hear a woman speak in public than it is to an Oriental to see her show her face in public at all. Once open the door of the harem, and she has the freedom of the house: the house includes the front door, and the street is but a prolonged doorstep. With the freedom of the street comes inevitably a free access to the platform, the tribunal, and the pulpit. You might as well try to stop the air in its escape from a punctured balloon, as to try, when woman is once out of the harem, to put her back there. Ceasing to be an Invisible Lady, she must become a visible force: there is no middle ground. There is no danger that she will not be anchored to the cradle, when cradle there is; but it will be by an elastic cable, that will leave her as free to think and vote as to pray. No woman is less a mother be-

cause she cares for all the concerns of the world into which her child is born. It was John Quincy Adams who said, defending the political petitions of the women of Plymouth, that "women are not only justified, but exhibit the most exalted virtue, when they do depart from the domestic circle, and enter on the concerns of their country, of humanity, and of their God."

VIII.

SACRED OBSCURITY.

IN the preface to that ill-named but delightful book, the "Remains of the late Mrs. Richard Trench," there is a singular remark by the editor, her son. He says that "the adage is certainly true in regard to the British matron, *Bene vixit quæ bene latuit,*" the meaning of this adage being, "She has lived well who has kept herself well out of sight." Applying this to his beloved mother, he further expresses a regret at disturbing her "sacred obscurity." Then he goes on to disturb it pretty effectually by printing a thick octavo volume of her most private letters.

It is a great source of strength and advantage to reformers, that there are always men preserved to be

living examples of this good old Oriental doctrine of "sacred obscurity." Just as Mr. Darwin needs for the demonstration of his theory that the lower orders of creation should still be present in visible form for purposes of comparison, so every reformer needs to fortify his position by showing examples of the original attitude from which society has been gradually emerging. If there had been no Oriental seclusion, many things in the present position of woman would be inexplicable. But when we point to that; when we show that even in the more enlightened Eastern countries it is still held indecorous to allude to the feminine members of a man's family; when we see among the Christian nations of Southern Europe many lingering traits of this same habit of seclusion; and when we find an archdeacon of the English Church still clinging to the theory, even while exhibiting his mother's family letters to the whole world—we more easily understand the course of development.

These re-assertions of the Oriental theory are simply reversions, as a naturalist would say, to the original type. They are instances of "atavism," like the occasional appearance of six fingers on one hand in a family where the great-great-grandfather happened to possess that ornament. Such

instances can always be found, when one takes the pains to look for them. Thus a critic, discussing in the *Atlantic Monthly* Mr. Mahaffy's book on "Social Life in Greece," is surprised that this writer should quote, in proof of the degradation of woman in Athens, the remark attributed to Pericles, "That woman is best who is least spoken of among men, whether for good or for evil." "In our opinion," adds the reviewer, "that remark was wise then, and is wise now." The Oriental theory is not then, it seems, extinct; and we are spared the pains of proving that it ever existed.

If this theory be true, how falsely has the admiration of mankind been given! If the most obscure woman is best, the most conspicuous must undoubtedly be worst. Tried by this standard, how unworthy must have been Elizabeth Barrett Browning, how reprehensible must be Dorothea Dix, what a model of all that is discreditable is Rosa Bonheur, what a crowning instance of human depravity is Florence Nightingale! Yet how consoling the thought, that, while these disreputable persons were thus wasting their substance in the riotous performance of what the world weakly styled good deeds, there were always women who saw the folly of such efforts, women who by steady devotion to

eating, drinking, and sleeping continued to keep themselves in sacred obscurity, and to prove themselves the ornaments of their sex, inasmuch as no human being ever had occasion to mention their names!

But alas for human inconsistency! As for this inverse-ratio theory,—this theory of virtue so exalted that it has never been known or felt or mentioned among men,—it is to be observed that those who hold it are the first to desert it when stirred by an immediate occasion. Just as a slaveholder, in the old times, after demonstrating to you that freedom was a curse to the negro, would instantly turn round, and inflict this greatest of all curses on some slave who had saved his life; so, I fear, would one of these philosophers, if he were profoundly impressed with any great action done by a woman, give the lie to all his theories, and celebrate her fame. In spite of all his fine principles, if he happened to be rescued from drowning by Grace Darling, he would put her name in the newspaper; if he were tended in hospital by Clara Barton, he would sound her praise; and, if his mother wrote as good letters as did Mrs. Trench, he would probably print them to the extent of five hundred pages, as the archdeacon did, and all his gospel of silence would exhale itself in a single sigh of regret in the preface.

IX.

OUR GIRLS.

AN American newspaper remarked some time since that Mrs. Livermore had just delivered in Newport her celebrated lecture, "What shall we do with our Trials?" It was, I suppose, one of those felicitous misprints, by which compositors build better than they know. The real title of the lecture was, "What shall we do with our Girls?" Perhaps it was the unconscious witticism of some poetic young type-setter, to whom damsels were as yet only pleasing pains; or of some premature cynic of the printing-office, who was in the habit of regarding himself as a Blighted Being.

Yet to how many is this morose phrase "humanly adaptive," as Mrs Browning abstrusely says! Anxious mothers, for instance, will accept it, the mothers of the thousands of surplus maidens—or whatever the statistics say—in Massachusetts. Frederica Bremer inserts in one of her novels an "Extra Leaf on Daughter-full Houses;" an extra that should have a large circulation in many towns of New England.

The most heroic and unflinching remedy for this class of trials, so far as my knowledge goes, was that announced by a small relative of my own, aged three, who sitting on the floor thus soliloquized to her doll: "If I had too many daughters, I'd take 'em into the woods and lose 'em—I'd take 'em to the sea and push 'em in: I wouldn't have too many daughters!" She is now a happy wife and mother; but Fate, warned in time by such exceeding plainness of speech, has judiciously endowed her chiefly with sons.

Most of the serious assertion that women are trials comes from masculine wisdom. One hears a good deal of it in summer, at the seaside, from the marriageable youth of some of our chief cities. After a languid hour's chat upon tailors or boots or the proper appointments of a harness,—or of the groom, so perfectly costumed that he seems but a part of the harness,—how often they fall to lamenting the extravagance, the exactions, the general unmarriageableness, of the young women of the present day! Some wit once said that the Pilgrim Mothers had much more to bear than the Pilgrim Fathers, since the Mothers had not only to endure the cold and the hunger, but to endure the Fathers beside. In hearing these remarks I have sometimes thought that

these young ladies must be extravagant indeed, if, in addition to their own expenses, they take to themselves so very costly a luxury as a fashionable husband.

And I think that wiser critics than these youths are sometimes tempted into treating these lovely and lovable "trials" in too severely hopeless a way. There is folly enough on the surface, no doubt, and something of it below the surface: yet who does not remember how, in time of need, all these follies proved themselves, during our civil war, but superficial things? The very maidens over whom we had shaken our anxious heads were suddenly those who with pale cheeks bade their lovers leave them, or who changed their gorgeous array for the plain garments of the hospital. So far as I can judge, there is not a young girl within the range of my knowledge who can confidently be insured against marrying a poor artist or a poorer army officer to-morrow, should she once fall thoroughly in love. And, once married, she will very probably develop a power of self-denial, of economy, and of dressing herself and baby gracefully out of the cast-off clothes of her genteel relations,—in a way to put her critics to shame. I think we ought all patiently to endure "trials" that turn to such blessings in the end.

For one, I can truly say, with charming Mrs. Trench in her letters written in 1816, "I do believe the girls of the present day have not lost the power of blushing; and, though I have no grown-up daughters, I enjoy the friendship of some who might be my daughters, in whom the greatest delicacy and modesty are united with perfect ease of manner, and habitual intercourse with the world." And if this is the case,— and I think we shall all own it to be so,— we may as well have the typographical error corrected, after all, and hereafter say—for "trials" read "girls."

X.

VIRTUES IN COMMON.

A YOUNG friend of mine, who was educated at one of the very best schools for girls in New York City, told me that one day her teacher requested the older girls to write out a list of virtues suitable to manly character, which they did. A month or more later, when this occurrence was well forgotten, the same teacher bade them write out a list of womanly virtues,

she making no reference to the other list. Then she made each girl compare her lists ; and they all found with surprise that there was no substantial difference between them. The only variation, in most cases, was, that they had put in a rather vague special virtue of "manliness" in the one case and "womanliness" in the other ; a sort of miscellaneous department or "odd drawer," apparently, in which to group all traits not easily analyzed.

The moral is, that, as tested by the common-sense of these young people, duty is duty, and the difference between ethics for men and ethics for women lies simply in practical applications, not in principles.

Who can deny that the philosopher Antisthenes was right when he said, "The virtues of the man and the woman are the same"? Not the Christian, certainly ; for he accepts as his highest standard the being who in all history best united the highest qualities of both sexes. Not the metaphysician ; for his analysis deals with the human mind as such, not with the mind of either sex. Not the evolutionist ; for he is accustomed to trace back qualities to their source, and cannot deny that there is in each sex at least a "survival" of every good and every bad trait. We may say that these qualities are, or may be, or ought to be, distributed unequally between the sexes ;

but we cannot reasonably deny that each sex possesses a share of every quality, and that what is good in one sex is also good in the other. Man may be the braver, and yet courage in a woman may be nobler than cowardice. Woman may be the purer, and yet purity may be noble in a man.

So clear is this, that some of the very coarsest writers in all literature, and those who have been severest upon women, have yet been obliged to acknowledge it. Take, for instance, Dean Swift, who writes:—

"I am ignorant of any one quality that is amiable in a woman, which is not equally so in a man. I do not except even modesty and gentleness of nature; nor do I know one vice or folly which is not equally detestable in both."

Mrs. Jameson, in her delightful "Commonplace Book," illustrates this admirably by one or two test cases. She takes, for instance, from one of Humboldt's letters a much-admired passage on manly character:—

"Masculine independence of mind I hold to be in reality the first requisite for the formation of a character of real manly worth. The man who allows himself to be deceived and carried away by his own weakness, may be a very amiable person in other respects, but cannot be called a good man; such beings should not find favour in the eyes of a woman, for a truly beautiful and purely feminine nature should be

attracted only by what is highest and noblest in the character of man."

"Take now this same bit of moral philosophy," she says, "and apply it to the feminine character, and it reads quite as well:—

"'Feminine independence of mind I hold to be in reality the first requisite for the formation of a character of real feminine worth. The woman who allows herself to be deceived and carried away by her own weakness, may be a very amiable person in other respects, but cannot be called a good woman; such beings should not find favour in the eyes of a man, for a truly beautiful and purely manly nature should be attracted only by what is highest and noblest in the character of woman.'"

I have never been able to perceive that there was a quality or grace of character which really belonged exclusively to either sex, or which failed to win honour when wisely exercised by either. It is not thought necessary to have separate editions of books on ethical science, the one for man, the other for woman, like almanacs calculated for different latitudes. The books that vary are not the scientific works, but little manuals of practical application—"Duties of Men," "Duties of Women." These vary with times and places: where women do not know how to read, no advice on reading will be found in the women's manuals; where it is held wrong for women to uncover the face, it will be laid down in these

manuals as a sin. But ethics are ethics: the great principles of morals, as proclaimed either by science or by religion, do not fluctuate for sex; their basis is in the very foundations of right itself.

This grows clearer when we remember that it is equally true in mental science. There is not one logic for men, and another for women; a separate syllogism, a separate induction: the moment we begin to state intellectual principles, that moment we go beyond sex. We deal then with absolute truth. If an observation is wrong, if a process of reasoning is bad, it makes no difference who brings it forward. Any list of mental processes, any inventory of the contents of the mind, would be identical, so far as sex goes, whether compiled by a woman or a man. These things, like the circulation of the blood or the digestion of food, belong clearly to the ground held in common. The London *Spectator* well said lately,—

"After all, knowledge is knowledge; and there is no more a specifically feminine way of describing correctly the origin of the Lollard movement, or the character of Spenser's poetry, than there is a specifically feminine way of solving a quadratic equation, or of proving the forty-seventh problem of Euclid's first book."

All we can say in modification of this is, that there is, after all, a foundation for the rather vague item of "manliness" and "womanliness" in these school-

girl lists of duties. There is a difference, after all is said and done; but it is something that eludes analysis, like the differing perfume of two flowers of the same genus and even of the same species. The method of thought must be essentially the same in both sexes; and yet an average woman will put more flavour of something we call instinct into her mental action, and the average man something more of what we call logic into his. Whipple tells us that not a man guessed the plot of Dickens's "Great Expectations," while many women did; and this certainly indicates some average difference of quality or method. So the average opinions of a hundred women, on some question of ethics, might very probably differ from the average of a hundred men, while yet it remains true that "the virtues of the man and the woman are the same."

XI.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES.

BLACKBURN, in his entertaining book, "Artists and Arabs," draws a contrast between Frith's painting of the "Derby Day" and Rosa Bonheur's "Horse

Fair,"—"the former pleasing the eye by its cleverness and prettiness, the latter impressing the spectator by its power and its truthful rendering of animal life. The difference between the two painters is probably more one of education than of natural gifts. But, whilst the style of the former is grafted on a fashion, the latter is founded on a rock,—the result of a close study of nature, chastened by classic feeling and a remembrance, it may be, of the friezes of the Parthenon."

Now, it is to be observed that this description runs precisely counter to the popular impression as to the work of the two sexes. Novelists like Charles Reade, for instance, who have apparently seen precisely one woman in their lives, and hardly more than one man, and who keep on sketching these two figures most felicitously and brilliantly thenceforward, would be apt to assign these qualities of the artist very differently. Their typical man would do the truthful and powerful work, and everybody would say, "How manly!" Their woman would please by cleverness and prettiness, and everybody would say, "How womanly!" Yet Blackburn shows us that these qualities are individual, not sexual; that they result from temperament, or, he thinks, still more from training. If Rosa Bonheur does better work than

Frith, it is not because she is a woman, nor is it in spite of that; but because, setting sex aside, she is a better artist.

This is not denying the distinctions of sex, but only asserting that they are not so exclusive and all-absorbing as is supposed. It is easy to name other grounds of difference which entirely ignore those of sex, striking directly across them, and rendering a different classification necessary. It is thus with distinctions of race or colour, for instance. An Indian man and woman are at many points more like to one another than is either to a white person of the same sex. A black-haired man and woman, or a fair-haired man and woman, are to be classified together in these physiological aspects. So of differences of genius: a man and woman of musical temperament and training have more in common than has either with a person who is of the same sex, but who cannot tell one note from another. So two persons of ardent or imaginative temperament are thus far alike, though the gulf of sex divides them; and so are two persons of cold or prosaic temperament. In a mixed school the teacher cannot class together intellectually the boys as such, and the girls as such: bright boys take hold of a lesson very much as bright girls do, and slow girls like slow boys.

Nature is too rich, too full, too varied, to be content with a single basis of classification: she has a hundred systems of grouping, according to sex, age, race, temperament, training, and so on; and we get but a narrow view of life when we limit our theories to one set of distinctions.

As a matter of social philosophy, this train of thought logically leads to co-education, impartial suffrage, and free co-operation in all the affairs of life. As a matter of individual duty, it teaches the old moral to "act well your part." No wise person will ever trouble himself or herself much about the limitations of sex in intellectual labour. Rosa Bonheur was not trying to work like a woman, or like a man, or unlike either, but to do her work thoroughly and well. He or she who works in this spirit works nobly, and gives an example which will pass beyond the bounds of sex, and help all. The Abbé Liszt, the most gifted of living pianists, told a friend of mine, his pupil, that he had learned more of music from hearing Madame Malibran sing than from anything else whatever.

XII.

ANGELIC SUPERIORITY.

IT is better not to base any plea for woman on the ground of her angelic superiority. The argument proves too much. If she is already so perfect, there is every inducement to let well alone. It suggests the expediency of conforming man's condition to hers, instead of conforming hers to man's. If she is a winged creature, and man can only crawl, it is his condition that needs mending.

Besides, one may well be a little incredulous of these vast claims. Granting some average advantage to woman, it is not of such completeness as to base much argument upon it. The minister looking on his congregation, rarely sees an unmixed angel, either at the head or at the foot of any pew. The domestic servant rarely has the felicity of waiting on an absolute saint at either end of the dinner-table. The lady's-maid has to compare her little observations of human infirmity with those of the valet-de-chambre. The lover worships the beloved, whether man or woman; but marriage bears rather hard on the ideal

in either case. And those who pray out of the same book, "Have mercy upon us, miserable sinners," are not supposed to be offering up petitions for each other only.

We all know many women whose lives are made wretched by the sins and follies of their husbands. There are also many men whose lives are turned to long wretchedness by the selfishness, the worldliness, or the bad temper of their wives. Domestic tyranny belongs to neither sex by monopoly. If man tortures or depresses woman, she also has a fearful power to corrupt and deprave man. On the other hand, to quote old Antisthenes once more, "the virtues of the man and woman are the same." A refined man is more refined than a coarse woman. A child-loving man is infinitely tenderer and sweeter toward children than a hard and unsympathetic woman. The very qualities that are claimed as distinctively feminine are possessed more abundantly by many men than by many of what is called the softer sex.

Why is it necessary to say all this? Because there is always danger that we who believe in the equality of the sexes should be led into over-statements, which will re-act against ourselves. It is not safe to say that the ballot-box would be reformed if intrusted

to feminine votes alone. Had the voters of the South been all women, it would have plunged earlier into the gulf of secession, dived deeper, and come up even more reluctantly. Were the women of Spain to rule its destinies unchecked, the Pope would be its master, and the Inquisition might be re-established. For all that we can see, the rule of women alone would be as bad as the rule of men alone. It would be as unsafe to give woman the absolute control of man as to make man the master of woman.

Let us be a shade more cautious in our reasonings. Woman needs equal rights, not because she is man's better half, but because she is his other half. She needs them, not as an angel, but as a fraction of humanity. Her political education will not merely help man, but it will help herself. She will sometimes be right in her opinions, and sometimes be altogether wrong; but she will learn, as man learns, by her own blunders. The demand in her behalf is, that she shall have the opportunity to make mistakes, since it is by that means she must become wise.

In all our towns there is a tendency toward "mixed schools." We rarely hear of the sexes being separated in a school after being once united; but we constantly hear of their being brought together after separation. This is commonly, but mistakenly,

recommended as an advantage to the boys alone. I once heard an accomplished teacher remonstrate against this change, when thus urged. "Why should my girls be sacrificed," she said, "to improve your boys?" Six months after, she had learned by experience. "Why," she asked, "did you rest the argument on so narrow a ground? Since my school consisted half of boys, I find with surprise that the change has improved both sexes. My girls are more ambitious, more obedient, and more ladylike. I shall never distrust the policy of mixed schools again."

What is true of the school is true of the family and of the state. It is not good for man, or for woman, to be alone. Granting the woman to be, on the whole, the more spiritually minded, it is still true that each sex needs the other. When the rivet falls from a pair of scissors, we do not have them mended because either half can claim angelic superiority over the other half, but because it takes two halves to make a whole.

XIII.

VICARIOUS HONOURS.

THERE is a story in circulation—possibly without authority—to the effect that a certain young lady has ascended so many Alps that she would have been chosen a member of the English Alpine Club, but for her misfortune in respect to sex. As a matter of personal recognition, however, and, as it were, of approximate courtesy, her dog, who has accompanied her in all her trips, and is not debased by sex, has been elected into the club. She has therefore an opportunity for exercising in behalf of her dog that beautiful self-abnegation which is said to be a part of woman's nature, impelling her always to prefer that her laurels should be worn by somebody else.

The dog probably made no objection to these vicarious honours; nor is any objection made by the young gentlemen who reply eloquently to the toast, "The Ladies," at public dinners, or who kindly consent to be educated at masculine colleges on "scholarships" founded by women. At Harvard

University alone there are ten such scholarships,—their income amounting annually to $2,340 in all. Those who receive the emoluments of these funds must reflect within themselves, occasionally, how grand a thing is this power of substitution given to women, and how pleasant are its occasional results to the substitute. It is doubtless more blessed to give than to receive, but to receive without giving has also its pleasures. Very likely the holder of the scholarship, and the orator who rises with his hand on his heart to "reply in behalf of the ladies," may do their appointed work well; and so did the Alpine dog. Yet, after all, but for the work done by his mistress, he would have won no more honour from the Alpine Club than if he had been a chamois.

Nothing since Artemus Ward and his wife's relations has been finer than the generous way in which fathers and brothers disclaim all desire for profits or honours on the part of their feminine relatives. In a certain system of schools once known to me, the boys had prizes of money on certain occasions, but the successful girls at those times received simply a testimonial of honour for each; "the Committee being convinced," it was said, "that this was more consonant with the true delicacy and generosity of woman's nature." So in the new arrangements for opening

the University of Copenhagen to young women, Karl Blind writes to the *New York Evening Post*, that it is expressly provided that they shall not "share in the academic benefices and stipends which have been set apart for male students." Half of these charities may, for aught that appears, have been established originally by women, like the ten Harvard scholarships already named. Women, however, can avail themselves of them only by deputy, as the Alp-climbing young lady is represented by her dog.

It is all a beautiful tribute to the disinterestedness of woman. The only pity is that this virtue, so much admired, should not be reciprocated by showing the like disinterestedness toward her. It does not appear that the butchers and bakers of Copenhagen propose to reduce in the case of women students "the benefices and stipends" which are to be paid for daily food. Young ladies at the university are only prohibited from receiving money, not from needing it. Nor will any of the necessary fatigues of Alpine climbing be relaxed for any young lady because she is a woman. The fatigues will remain in full force, though the laurels be denied. The mountain passes will make small account of the "tenderness and delicacy of her sex." When the

toil is over she will be regarded as too delicate to be thanked for it; but, by way of compensation, the Alpine Club will allow her to be represented by her dog.

XIV.

"CELERY AND CHERUBS."

THERE was once a real or imaginary old lady who had got the metaphor of Scylla and Charybdis a little confused. Wishing to describe a perplexing situation this lady said,—

"You see, my dear, she was between Celery on one side and Cherubs on the other! You know about Celery and Cherubs, don't you? They was two rocks somewhere; and if you didn't hit one, you was pretty sure to run smack on the other."

This describes, as a clever writer in the *New York Tribune* declares, the present condition of women who "agitate." Their Celery and Cherubs are tears and temper.

It is a good hit, and we may well make a note of it. It is the danger of all reformers, that they will vibrate between discouragement and anger. When things go wrong, what is it one's impulse to do? To

be cast down, or to be stirred up; to wring one's hands, or clench one's fists,—in short, tears or temper.

"Mother," said a resolute little girl of my acquaintance, "if the dinner was all spoiled, I wouldn't sit down and cry! I'd say, 'Hang it!'" This cherub preferred the alternative of temper, on days when the celery turned out badly. Probably her mother was addicted to the other practice, and exhibited the tears.

But as this alternative is found to exist for both sexes, and on all occasions, why charge it especially on the woman-suffrage movement? Men are certainly as much given to ill temper as women; and, if they are less inclined to tears, they make it up in sulks, which are just as bad. Nicholas Nickleby, when the pump was frozen, was advised by Mr. Squeers to "content himself with a dry polish;" and so there is a kind of dry despair into which men fall, which is quite as forlorn as any tears of women. How many a man has doubtless wished at such times that the pump of his lachrymal glands could only thaw out, and he could give his emotions something more than a "dry polish"! The unspeakable comfort some women feel in sitting for ten minutes with a handkerchief over their eyes! The freshness, the

heartiness, the new life visible in them, when the crying is done, and the handkerchief comes down again!

And, indeed, this simple statement brings us to the real truth, which should have been more clearly seen by the writer who tells this story. She is wrong in saying, "It is urged that men and women stand on an equality, are exactly alike." Many of us urge the "equality": very few of us urge the "exactly alike." An apple and an orange, a potato and a tomato, a rose and a lily, the Episcopal and the Presbyterian churches, Oxford and Cambridge, Yale and Harvard,—we may surely grant equality in each case, without being so exceedingly foolish as to go on and say that they are exactly alike.

And precisely here is the weak point of the whole case, as presented by this writer. Women give way to tears more readily than men? Granted. Is their sex any the weaker for it? Not a bit. It is simply a difference of temperament: that is all. It involves no inferiority. If you think that this habit necessarily means weakness, wait and see! Who has not seen women break down in tears during some domestic calamity, while the "stronger sex" were calm; and who has not seen those same women, that temporary excitement being over, rise up and dry their eyes, and

be thenceforth the support and stay of their households, and perhaps bear up the "stronger sex" as a stream bears up a ship? I said once to an experienced physician, watching such a woman, "That woman is really great."—"Of course she is," he answered: "did you ever see a woman who was not great, when the emergency required?"

Now, will women carry this same quality of temperament into their public career? Doubtless: otherwise they would cease to be women. Will it be betraying confidence if I own that I have seen two of the very bravest women of my acquaintance—women who have swayed great audiences—burst into tears, during a committee-meeting, at a moment of expected adversity for "the cause"? How pitiable! our critical observers would have thought. In five minutes that April shower had passed, and those women were as resolute and unconquerable as Queen Elizabeth: they were again the natural leaders of those around them; and the cool and tearless men who sat beside them were nothing—men were "a lost art," as some one says—compared with the inexhaustible moral vitality of those two women.

No: the dangers of "Celery and Cherubs" are exaggerated. For temper, women are as good as men, and no better. As for tears, long may they

flow! They are symbols of that mighty distinction of sex which is as ineffaceable and as essential as the difference between land and sea.

XV.

"ALLURES TO BRIGHTER WORLDS AND LEADS THE WAY."

WHEN the Massachusetts House of Representatives had "School Suffrage" under consideration, the other day, the suggestion was made by one of the pithiest and quaintest of the speakers, that men were always better for the society of women, and therefore ought to vote in their company. "If all of us," he said, "would stay away from all places where we cannot take our wives and daughters with us, we should keep better company than we now do." This expresses a feeling which grows more and more common among the better class of men, and which is the key to much progress in the condition of women. There can be no doubt that the increased association of the sexes in society, in school, in literature, tends to purify these several spheres of action. Yet, when

we come to philosophize on this, there occur some perplexities on the way.

For instance, the exclusion of woman from all these spheres was in ancient Greece almost complete; yet the leading Greek poets, as Homer and the tragedians, are exceedingly chaste in tone, and in this respect beyond most of the great poets of modern nations. Again, no European nation has quite so far sequestered and subordinated women as has Spain; and yet the whole tone of Spanish literature is conspicuously grave and decorous. This plainly indicates that race has much to do with the matter, and that the mere admission or exclusion of women is but one among several factors. In short, it is easy to make out a case by a rhetorical use of the facts on one side; but, if we look at all the facts, the matter presents greater difficulties.

Again, it is to be noted that in several countries the first women who have taken prominent part in literature have been as bad as the men; as, for instance, Marguerite of Navarre and Mrs. Aphra Behn. This might indeed be explained by supposing that they had to gain entrance into literature by accepting the dissolute standards which they found prevailing. But it would probably be more correct to say that these standards themselves were variable,

and that their variation affected, at certain periods, women as well as men. Marguerite of Navarre wrote religious books as well as merry stories; and we know from Lockhart's Life of Scott, that ladies of high character in Edinburgh used to read Mrs. Behn's tales and plays aloud, at one time, with delight,—although one of the same ladies found, in her old age, that she could not read them to herself without blushing. Shakspeare puts coarse repartees into the mouths of women of stainless virtue. George Sand is not considered an unexceptionable writer; but she tells us in her autobiography that she found among her grandmother's papers, poems and satires so indecent that she could not read them through, and yet they bore the names of *abbés* and gentlemen whom she remembered in her childhood as models of dignity and honour. Voltaire inscribes to ladies of high rank, who doubtless regarded it as a great compliment, verses such as not even a poet of the English "fleshly school" would now print at all. In "Poems by Eminent Ladies,"—published in 1755 and reprinted in 1774,—there are one or two poems as gross and disgusting as anything in Swift; yet their authors were thought reputable women. Allan Ramsay's "Tea-Table Miscellany"—a collection of English and Scottish songs—was first published in

1724; and in his preface to the sixteenth edition the editor attributes its great success, especially among the ladies, to the fact that he has carefully excluded all grossness, "that the modest voice and ear of the fair singer might meet with no affront;" and adds, "the chief bent of all my studies being to attain their good graces." There is no doubt of the great popularity enjoyed by the book in all circles; yet it contains a few songs which the most licentious newspaper would not now publish. The inference is irresistible, from this and many other similar facts, that the whole tone of manners and decency has very greatly improved among the European races within a century and a half.

I suspect the truth to be, that, besides the visible influence of race and religion, there has been an insensible and almost unconscious improvement in each sex, with respect to these matters, as time has passed on; and that the mutual desire to please has enabled each sex to help the other,—the sex which is naturally the more refined taking the lead. But I should lay more stress on this mutual influence, and less on mere feminine superiority, than would be laid by many. It is often claimed by teachers that co-education helps not only boys, but also girls, to develop greater propriety of manners. When the

sexes are wholly separate, or associate on terms of entire inequality, no such good influence occurs; the more equal the association, the better for both parties. After all, the Divine model is to be found in the family; and the best ingenuity cannot improve much upon it.

THE HOME.

"*In respect to the powers and rights of married women, the law is by no means abreast of the spirit of the age. Here are seen the old fossil footprints of feudalism. The law relating to woman tends to make every family a barony or a monarchy or a despotism, of which the husband is the baron, king, or despot, and the wife the dependant, serf, or slave. That this is not always the fact, is not due to the law, but to the enlarged humanity which spurns the narrow limits of its rules. The progress of civilization has changed the family from a barony to a republic; but the law has not kept pace with the advance of ideas, manners, and customs.*"—W. W. STORY'S Treatise on Contracts not under Seal, § 84, third edition, p. 89.

XVI.

WANTED—HOMES.

WE see advertisements, occasionally, of "Homes for Aged Women," and more rarely "Homes for Aged Men." The question sometimes suggests itself, whether it would not be better to begin the provision earlier and see that homes are also provided, in some form, for the middle-aged, and even the young. The trouble is, I suppose, that as it takes two to make a bargain, so it takes at least two to make a home; and unluckily it takes only one to spoil it.

Madame Roland once defined marriage as an institution where one person undertakes to provide happiness for two ; and many failures are accounted for, no doubt, by this false basis. Sometimes it is the man, more often the woman, of whom this extravagant demand is made. There are marriages which have proved a wreck almost wholly through the fault of the wife. Nor is this confined to wedded homes alone. I have known a son who lived alone, patiently and uncomplainingly, with that saddest of all conceivable companions, a drunken mother. I have known another young man who supported in his own home a mother and sister, both habitual drunkards. All these were American-born, and all of respectable social position. A home shadowed by such misery is not a home, though it might have been a home but for the sins of women. Such instances are, however, rare and occasional compared with the cases where the same offence in the husband makes ruin of the home.

Then there are the cases where indolence, or selfishness, or vanity, or the love of social excitement, in the woman, unfits her for home life. Here we come upon ground where perhaps woman is the greater sinner. It must be remembered, however, that against this must be balanced the neglect

produced by club-life, or by the life of society-membership, in a man. A brilliant young married belle in London once told me that she was glad her husband was so fond of his club, for it amused him every night while she went to balls. "Married men do not go much into society here," she said, "unless they are regular flirts,—which I do not think my husband would ever be, for he is very fond of me,—so he goes every night to his club and gets home about the same time that I do. It is a very nice arrangement." It was apparently spoken in all the fearlessness of innocence, but I believe that it has since ended in a "separation."

It is common to denounce club-life in our large cities as destructive of the home. The modern club is simply a more refined substitute for the old-fashioned tavern, and is on the whole an advance in morals as well as manners. In our large cities a man in a certain social coterie belongs to a club if he can afford it, as a means of contact with his fellows, and to have various conveniences which he cannot so economically obtain at home. A few haunt them constantly; the many use them occasionally. More absorbing than clubs, perhaps, are the secret societies which have so revived among us since the war, and which consume time so fearfully. There was

a case mentioned in the newspapers lately, of a man who belonged to some twenty of these associations; and when he died, and each wished to conduct his funeral, great was the strife. In the small city where I write, there are seventeen secret societies down in the directory, and I suppose as many more not so conspicuous. I meet men who assure me that they habitually attend a society-meeting every evening of the week except Sunday, and a church meeting then. These are rarely men of leisure: they are usually mechanics, or business men of some kind, who are hard at work all day, and never see their families except at meal-times. Their case is far worse, so far as absence from home is concerned, than that of the "club-men" of large cities; for these are often men of leisure, who, if married, at least make home one of their lounging-places, which the secret-society men do not.

I honestly believe that this melancholy desertion of the home is largely due to the traditional separation between the alleged spheres of the sexes. The theory still prevails largely, that home is the peculiar province of the woman, that she has almost no duties out of it; and hence, naturally enough, that the husband has almost no duties in it. If he is amused

there, let him stay there; but, as it is not his recognized sphere of duty, he is not actually violating any duty by absenting himself. This theory even pervades our manuals of morals, of metaphysics, and of popular science; and it is not every public teacher who has the manliness, having once stated it, to modify his statement, as did the venerable President Hopkins of Williams College, when lecturing to the young ladies of Vassar.

"I would," he said, "at this point correct my teaching in 'The Law of Love' to the effect that home is peculiarly the sphere of woman, and civil government that of man. *I now regard the home as the joint sphere of man and woman, and the sphere of civil government more of an open question as between the two.* It is, however, to be lamented that the present agitation concerning the rights of woman is so much a matter of 'rights' rather than of 'duties,' as the reform of the latter would involve the former."

If our instructors in moral philosophy will only base their theory of ethics as broadly as this, we shall no longer need to advertise "Homes Wanted;" for the joint efforts of men and women will soon provide them.

XVII.

THE ORIGIN OF CIVILIZATION.

NOTHING throws more light on the whole history of woman than the first illustration in Sir John Lubbock's "Origin of Civilization." A young girl, almost naked, is being dragged furiously along the ground by a party of naked savages, armed literally to the teeth, while those of another band grasp her by the arm, and almost tear her asunder in the effort to hold her back. These last are her brothers and her friends; the others are—her enemies? As you please to call them. They are her future husband and his kinsmen, who have come to aid him in his wooing.

This was the primitive rite of marriage. Vestiges of it still remain among savage nations. And all the romance and grace of the most refined modern marriage—the orange-blossoms, the bridal veil, the church service, the wedding-feast—these are only the "bright consummate flower" reared by civilization from that rough seed. All the brutal encounter is softened into this. Nothing remains of the barbarism except the one word "obey," and even that is going.

Now, to say that a thing is going, is to say that it will presently be gone. To say that any thing is changed, is to say that it is to change further. If it never has been altered, perhaps it will not be ; but a proved alteration of an inch in a year opens the way to an indefinite modification. The study of the glaciers, for instance, began with the discovery that they had moved ; and from that moment no one doubted that they were moving all the time. It is the same with the position of woman. Once open your eyes to the fact that it has changed, and who is to predict where the matter shall end ? It is sheer folly to say, " Her relative position will always be what it has been," when one glance at Sir John Lubbock's picture shows that there is no fixed "has been," but that her original position was long since altered and revised. Those who still use this argument are like those who laughed at the lines of stakes which Agassiz planted across the Aar glacier in 1840. But the stakes settled the question, and proved the motion. *Pero si muove:* "But it moves."

The motion once proved, the whole range of possible progress is before us. The amazement of that formerly "heathen Chinee" in Boston when he saw a woman addressing a missionary meeting ; the astonishment of all English visitors when young

ladies hear classes in geometry and Latin, in our high schools ; the surprise of foreigners at seeing the rough throng in the Cooper Institute reading-room submit to the sway of one young woman with a crochet-needle—all these simply testify to the fact that the stakes have moved. That they have yet been carried half-way to the end, who knows ? What a step from the horrible nuptials of those savage days to the poetic marriage of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett—the "Sonnets from the Portuguese" on one side, the "One Word More" on the other! But who can say that the whole relation between man and woman reached its climax there, and that where the past has brought changes so vast the future is to add nothing? Who knows that, when "the world's great bridals come," people may not look back with pity, even on this era of the Brownings? Probably even Elizabeth Barrett promised to obey!

At any rate, it is safe to say that each step concedes the probability of another. Even from the naked barbarian to the veiled Oriental, from the savage hut to the carefully enshrined harem, is a step forward. It is another step in the spiral line of progress to the unveiled face and comparatively free movements of the modern English or American woman. From the

kitchen to the public lecture-room, from that to the lecture-platform, and from that again to the ballot-box,—these are far slighter steps than those which have already lifted the savage girl of Sir John Lubbock's picture into the possession of the alphabet and the dignity of a home. So easy are these future changes beside those of the past, that to doubt their possibility is as if Agassiz, after tracing year by year the motion of his Alpine glacier, should deny its power to move one inch farther into the sunny valley, and there to melt harmlessly away.

XVIII.

THE LOW-WATER MARK.

WE constantly see it assumed, in arguments against any step in the elevation of woman, that her position is a thing fixed permanently by nature, so that there can be in it no great or essential change. Every successive modification is resisted as "a reform against nature;" and this argument from permanence is always that appealing most strongly to conservative minds. Let us see how the facts confirm it.

A story is going the rounds of the newspapers in regard to a Russian peasant and his wife. For some act of disobedience the peasant took the law into his own hands; and his mode of discipline was to tie the poor creature naked to a post in the street, and to call on every passer-by to strike her a blow. Not satisfied with this, he placed her on the ground, and tied heavy weights on her limbs until one arm was broken. When finally released, she made a complaint against him in court. The court discharged him on the ground that he had not exceeded the legal authority of a husband. Encouraged by this, he caused her to be arrested in return; and the same court sentenced her to another public whipping for disobedience.

No authority was given for this story in the newspaper where I saw it; but it certainly did not first appear in a woman-suffrage newspaper, and cannot therefore be a manufactured "outrage." I use it simply to illustrate the low-water mark at which the position of woman may rest, in the largest Christian nation of the world. All the refinements, all the education, all the comparative justice, of modern society, have been gradually upheaved from some such depth as this. When the gipsies described by Leland treat even the ground trodden upon by a woman as impure, they simply illustrate the low plane

from which all the elevation of woman has begun. All these things show that the position of that sex in society, so far from being a thing in itself permanent, has been in reality the most variable of all factors in the social problem. And this inevitably suggests the question, Are we any more sure that her present position is finally and absolutely fixed than were those who observed it at any previous time in the world's history? Granting that her condition was once at low-water mark, who is authorized to say that it has yet reached high-tide?

It is very possible that this Russian wife, once scourged back to submission, ended her days in the conviction, and taught to her daughters, that such was a woman's rightful place. When an American woman of to-day says, "I have all the rights I want," is she on any surer ground? Grant that the difference is vast between the two. How do we know that even the later condition is final, or that anything is final but entire equality before the laws? It is not many years since William Story—in a legal work inspired and revised by his father, the greatest of American jurists—wrote this indignant protest against the injustice of the old common law:—

"In respect to the powers and rights of married women the law is by no means abreast of the spirit of the age. Here

are seen the old fossil footprints of feudalism. The law relating to woman tends to make every family a barony or a monarchy or a despotism, of which the husband is the baron, king, or despot, and the wife the dependant, serf or slave. That this is not always the fact, is not due to the law, but to the enlarged humanity which spurns the narrow limits of its rules. The progress of civilization has changed the family from a barony to a republic ; but the law has not kept pace with the advance of ideas, manners, and customs. And, although public opinion is a check to legal rules on the subject, the rules are feudal and stern. Yet the position of woman throughout history serves as the criterion of the freedom of the people or an age. When man shall despise that right which is founded only on might, woman will be free and stand on an equal level with him—a friend and not a dependant."

We know that the law is greatly changed and ameliorated in many places since Story wrote this statement ; but we also know how almost every one of these changes was resisted : and who is authorized to say that the final and equitable fulfilment is yet reached ?

XIX.

"OBEY."

AFTER witnessing the marriage ceremony of the Episcopal Church, the other day, I walked down the aisle with the young rector who had officiated. It was

natural to speak of the beauty of the Church service on an occasion like that; but, after doing this, I felt compelled to protest against the unrighteous pledge to obey. "I hope," I said, "to live to see that word expunged from the Episcopal service, as it has been from that of the Methodists."

"Why?" he asked. "Is it because you know that they will not obey, whatever their promise?"

"Because they ought not," I said.

"Well," said he, after a few moments' reflection, and looking up frankly, "I do not think they ought!"

Here was a young clergyman of great earnestness and self-devotion, who included it among the sacred duties of his life to impose upon ignorant young girls a solemn obligation, which he yet thought they ought not to incur, and did not believe that they would keep. There could hardly be a better illustration of the confusion in the public mind, or the manner in which "the subjection of woman" is being outgrown, or the subtile way in which this subjection has been interwoven with sacred ties, and baptized "duty."

The advocates of woman suffrage are constantly reproved for using the terms "subjection," "oppression," and "slavery," as applied to woman. They

simply commit the same sin as that committed by the original abolitionists. They are "as harsh as truth, as uncompromising as justice." Of course they talk about oppression and emancipation. It is the word *obey* that constitutes the one, and shows the need of the other. Whoever is pledged to obey is technically and literally a slave, no matter how many roses surround the chains. All the more so if the slavery is self-imposed, and surrounded by all the prescriptions of religion. Make the marriage-tie as close as Church or State can make it; but let it be equal, impartial. That it may be so, the word *obey* must be abandoned, or made reciprocal. Where invariable obedience is promised, equality is gone.

That there may be no doubt about the meaning of this word in the marriage-covenant, the usages of nations often add symbolic explanations. These are generally simple and brutal enough to be understood. The Hebrew ceremony, when the bridegroom took off his slipper and struck the bride on the neck as she crossed his threshold, was unmistakable. As my black sergeant said, when a white prisoner questioned his authority, and he pointed to the *chevrons* on his sleeve—"Dat mean guv'ment." All these forms mean simply government also. The ceremony of the slipper has now no recognition, except when people

fling an old shoe after the bride, which is held by antiquarians to be the same observance. But it is all preserved and concentrated into a single word, when the bride promises to obey.

The deepest wretchedness that has ever been put into human language, or that has exceeded it, has grown out of that pledge. There is no misery on earth like that of a pure and refined woman who finds herself owned, body and soul, by a drunken, licentious, brutal man. The very fact that she is held to obedience by a spiritual tie makes it worse. Chattel-slavery was not so bad ; for, though the master might pervert religion for his own satisfaction, he could not impose upon the slave. Never yet did I see a negro slave who thought it a duty to obey his master ; and therefore there was always some dream of release. But who has not heard of some delicate and refined woman, one day of whose torture was equivalent to years of that possible to an obtuser frame,—who had the door of escape ready at hand for years, and yet died a lingering death rather than pass through it ; and this because she had promised to obey !

It is said of one of the most gifted women who ever trod American soil,—she being of English birth,—that before she obtained the divorce which

separated her from her profligate husband, she once went for counsel to the wife of her pastor. She unrolled before her the long catalogue of merciless outrages to which she had been subject, endangering finally her health, her life, and that of her children born and to be born. When she turned at last for advice to her confessor, with the agonized inquiry, "What is it my duty to do?"—"Do?" said the stern adviser: "lie down on the floor, and let your husband trample on you if he will. That is a woman's duty."

The woman who gave this advice was not naturally inhuman nor heartless: she had simply been trained in the school of obedience. The Jesuit doctrine, that a priest should be as a corpse, *perinde ac cadaver*, in the hands of a superior priest, is not worse. Woman has no right to delegate, nor man to assume, a responsibility so awful. Just in proportion as it is consistently carried out, it trains men from boyhood into self-indulgent tyrants; and, while some women are transformed by it to saints, others are crushed into deceitful slaves. That this was the result of chattel-slavery, this nation has at length learned. We learn more slowly the profounder and more subtile moral evil that follows from the unrighteous promise to obey.

XX.

WOMAN IN THE CHRYSALIS.

WHEN the bride receives the ring upon her finger, and utters—if she utters it—the unnatural promise to obey, she fancies a poetic beauty in the rite. Turning of her own free will from her maiden liberty, she voluntarily takes the yoke of service upon her. This is her view; but is this the historic fact in regard to marriage? Not at all. The pledge of obedience —the whole theory of inequality in marriage—is simply what is left to us of a former state of society, in which every woman, old or young, must obey somebody. The state of tutelage, implied in such a marriage, is merely what is left of the old theory of the "Perpetual Tutelage of Women," under the Roman law,

Roman law, from which our civil law is derived, has its foundation evidently in patriarchal tradition. It recognized at first the family only, and that family was held together by parental power (*patria potestas*). If the father died, his powers passed to the son or grandson, as the possible head of a new family; but

these powers never could pass to a woman, and every woman, of whatever age, must be under somebody's legal control. Her father dying, she was still subject through life to her nearest male relations, or to her father's nominees, as her guardians. She was under perpetual guardianship, both as to person or property. No years, no experience, could make her anything but a child before the law.

In Oriental countries the system was still more complete. "A man," says the Gentoo Code of Laws, "must keep his wife so much in subjection that she by no means be mistress of her own action. If the wife have her own free will, notwithstanding she be of a superior caste, she will behave amiss." But this authority, which still exists in India, is not merely conjugal. The husband exerts it simply as being the wife's legal guardian. If the woman be unmarried or a widow, she must be as rigorously held under some other guardianship. It is no uncommon thing for a woman in India to be the ward of her own son. Lucretia Mott or Florence Nightingale would there be in personal subjection to somebody. Any man of legal age would be recognized as a fit custodian for them, but there must be a man.

With some variation of details at different periods, the same system prevailed essentially at Rome, down

to the time when Rome became Christian. Those who wish for particulars will find them in an admirable chapter (the fifth) of Maine's "Ancient Law." At one time the husband was held to possess the *patria potestas*, or parental power, in its full force. By law "the woman passed *in manum viri*, that is, she became the daughter of her husband." All she had became his, and after his death she was retained in the same strict tutelage by any guardians his will might appoint. Afterwards, to soften this rigid bond, the woman was regarded in law as being temporarily deposited by her family with her husband; the family appointed guardians over her: and thus, between the two tyrannies, she won a sort of independence. Then came Christianity, and swept away the parental authority for married women, concentrating all upon the husband. Hence our legislation bears the mark of a double origin, and woman is half recognized as an equal and half as a slave.

It is necessary to remember, therefore, that all the relation of subjection in marriage is merely the residue of an unnatural system, of which all else is long since outgrown. It would have seemed to an ancient Roman a matter of course that a woman should, all her life long, obey the guardians set over her person. It still seems to many people a matter of course that

she should obey her husband. To others among us, on the contrary, both these theories of obedience seem barbarous, and the one is merely a relic of the other.

We cannot disregard the history of the Theory of Tutelage. If we could believe that a chrysalis is always a chrysalis, and a butterfly always a butterfly, we could easily leave each to its appropriate sphere; but when we see the chrysalis open, and the butterfly come half out of it, we know that sooner or later it must spread wings and fly. The theory of tutelage is the chrysalis. Woman is the butterfly. Sooner or later she will be wholly out.

XXI.

TWO AND TWO.

A YOUNG man of very good brains was telling me, the other day, his dreams of his future wife. Rattling on, more in joke than in earnest, he said, "She must be perfectly ignorant, and a bigot: she must know nothing, and believe everything. I should wish to have her call to me from the adjoining room, 'My dear, what do two and two make?'"

It did not seem to me that his demand would be so very hard to fill, since bigotry and ignorance are to be had almost anywhere for the asking; and, as for two and two, I should say that it had always been the habit of women to ask that question of some man, and to rest easily satisfied with the answer. They have generally called, as my friend wished, from some other room, saying, "My dear, what do two and two make?" and the husband or father or brother has answered and said, "My dear, they make four for a man and three for a woman."

At any given period in the history of woman, she has adopted man's whim as the measure of her rights; has claimed nothing; has sweetly accepted any thing: the law of two-and-two itself should be at his discretion. At any given moment, so well was his interpretation received, that it stood for absolute right. In Rome a woman, married or single, could not testify in court; in the middle ages, and down to quite modern times, she could not hold real estate; ten years ago she could not, in New England, obtain a collegiate education; even now she cannot vote.

The first principles of republican government are so rehearsed and re-rehearsed, that one would think they must become "as plain as that two and two make four." But we find throughout, that, as Emerson said

of another class of reasoners, "Their two is not the real two; their four is not the real four." We find different numerals and diverse arithmetical rules for the two sexes; as, in some Oriental countries, men and women speak different dialects of the same language.

In novels the hero often begins by dreaming, like my friend, of an ideal wife, who shall be ignorant of everything, and have only brains enough to be bigoted. Instead of sighing, like Falstaff, "Oh for a fine young thief, of the age of two-and-twenty or thereabout!" the hero sighs for a fine young idiot of similar age. When the hero is successful in his search and wooing, the novelist sometimes mercifully removes the young woman early, like David Copperfield's Dora, she bequeathing the bereaved husband, on her death-bed, to a woman of sense. In real life these convenient interruptions do not commonly occur, and the foolish youth regrets through many years that he did not select an Agnes instead.

The acute observer Stendhal says,—

"In Paris, the highest praise for a marriageable girl is to say, 'She has great sweetness of character and the disposition of a lamb.' Nothing produces more impression on fools who are looking out for wives. I think I see the interesting couple, two years after, breakfasting together on a dull day, with three tall lackeys waiting upon them!"

And he adds, still speaking in the interest of men,—

"Most men have a period in their career when they might do something great, a period when nothing seems impossible. The ignorance of women spoils for the human race this magnificent opportunity; and love, at the utmost, in these days, only inspires a young man to learn to ride well, or to make a judicious selection of a tailor."*

Society, however, discovers by degrees that there are conveniences in every woman's knowing the four rules of arithmetic for herself. Two and two come to the same amount on a butcher's bill, whether the order be given by a man or a woman; and it is the same in all affairs or investments, financial or moral. We shall one day learn that with laws, customs, and public affairs it is even so. Once get it rooted in a woman's mind, that, for her, two and two make three only, and sooner or later the accounts of the whole human race fail to balance.

XXII.

A MODEL HOUSEHOLD.

THERE is an African bird called the hornbill, whose habits are in some respects a model. The female

* De L'Amour, par de Stendhal (Henri Beyle). Paris, 1868 [written in 1822], pp. 182, 198.

builds her nest in a hollow tree, lays her eggs, and broods on them. So far, so good. Then the male feels that he must also contribute some service; so he walls up the hole closely, giving only room for the point of the female's bill to protrude. Until the eggs are hatched, she is thenceforth confined to her nest, and is in the meantime fed assiduously by her mate, who devotes himself entirely to this object. Dr. Livingstone has seen these nests in Africa, Layard and others in Asia, and Wallace in Sumatra.

Personally I have never seen a hornbill's nest. The nearest approach I ever made to it was when in Fayal I used to pass near a gloomy mansion, of which the front windows were walled up, and only one high window was visible in the rear, beyond the reach of eyes from any neighbouring house. In this cheerful abode, I was assured, a Portuguese lady had been for many years confined by her jealous husband. It was long since any neighbour had caught a glimpse of her, but it was supposed that she was alive. There is no reason to doubt that her husband fed her well. It was simply a case of human hornbill, with the imprisonment made perpetual.

I have more than once asked lawyers whether, in communities where the old common law prevailed,

there was any thing to prevent such an imprisonment of a married woman ; and they have always answered, "Nothing but public opinion." Where the husband has the legal custody of the wife's person, no *habeas corpus* can avail against him. The hornbill household is based on a strict application of the old common law. A Hindoo household was a hornbill household : "a woman, of whatsoever age, should never be mistress of her own actions," said the Code of Menu. An Athenian household was a hornbill's nest, and great was the outcry when some Aspasia broke out of it. When Mrs. Sherman petitions Congress against the emancipation of woman, we seem to hear the twittering of the hornbill mother, imploring to be left inside.

Under some forms, the hornbill theory becomes respectable. There are many peaceful families, innocent though torpid, where the only dream of existence is to have plenty of quiet, plenty of food, and plenty of well-fed children. For them this African household is a sufficient model. The wife is "a home body." The husband is "a good provider." These are honest people, and have a right to speak. The hornbill theory is only dishonest when it comes—as it often comes—from women who lead the life, not of good stay-at-home fowls, but of paroquets and humming-

birds,—who sorrowfully bemoan the active habits of enlightened women, while they themselves

> "Bear about the mockery of woe
> To midnight dances and the public show."

It is from these women, in Washington, New York, and elsewhere, that the loudest appeal for the hornbill standard of domesticity proceeds. Put them to the test, and give them their chicken-salad and champagne through a hole in the wall only, and see how they like it.

But even the most honest and peaceful conservatives will one day admit that the hornbill is not the highest model. Plato thought that "the soul of our grandame might haply inhabit the body of a bird;" but Nature has kindly provided various types of bird-households to suit all varieties of taste. The bright orioles, filling the summer boughs with colour and with song, are as truly domestic in the freedom of their airy nest as the poor hornbills who ignorantly make home into a dungeon. And certainly each new generation of orioles, spreading their free wings from that pendent cradle, are a happier illustration of judicious nurture than are the uncouth little offspring of the hornbills, whom Wallace describes as "so flabby and semi-transparent as to resemble a bladder

of jelly, furnished with head, legs, and rudimentary wings, but with not a sign of a feather, except a few lines of points indicating where they would come."

XXIII.

A SAFEGUARD FOR THE FAMILY.

MANY German-Americans are warm friends of woman suffrage; but the editors of "Puck," it seems, are not. In a late number of that comic journal, it had an unfavourable cartoon on this reform; and in a following number,—the number, by the way, which contains that amusing illustration of the vast seaside hotels of the future, with the cheering announcement, "Only one mile to the barber's shop," and "Take the cars to the dining-room,"—a lady comes to the rescue, and bravely defends woman suffrage. It seems that the original cartoon depicted in the corner a pretty family scene, representing father, mother, and children seated happily together, with the melancholy motto, "Nevermore, nevermore!" And when the correspondent, Mrs. Blake, very naturally asks what this touching picture has to do

with woman suffrage, Puck says, "If the husband in our 'pretty family scene' should propose to vote for the candidate who was obnoxious to his wife, would this 'pretty family scene' continue to be a domestic paradise, or would it remind the spectator of the region in which Dante spent his 'fortnight off'?"

It is beautiful to see how much anxiety there is to preserve the family. Every step in the modification of the old common law, whereby the wife was, in Baron Alderson's phrase, "the servant of her husband," was resisted as tending to endanger the family. That the wife should control her own earnings, so that her husband should not have the right to collect them in order to pay his gambling-debts, was declared by English advocates, in the celebrated case of the Hon. Mrs. Norton, the poetess, to imperil all the future peace of British households. Even the liberal-minded "Punch," about the time Girton College was founded in England, expressed grave doubts whether the harmony of wedded unions would not receive a blow, from the time when wives should be liable to know more Greek than their husbands. Yet the marriage relation has withstood these innovations. It has not been impaired, either by separate rights, private earnings, or independent Greek: can it be possible that a little voting will overthrow it?

The very ground on which woman suffrage is opposed by its enemies might assuage these fears. If, as we are told, women will not take the pains to vote except upon the strongest inducements, who has so good an opportunity as the husband to bring those inducements to bear? and, if so, what is the separation? Or if, as we are told, women will merely reflect their husbands' political opinions, why should they dispute about them? The mere suggestion of a difference deep enough to quarrel for, implies a real difference of convictions or interests, and indicates that there ought to be an independent representation of each; unless we fall back, once for all, on the common-law tradition that man and wife are one, and that one is the husband. Either the antagonisms which occur in politics are comparatively superficial, in which case they would do no harm; or else they touch matters of real interest and principle, in which case every human being has a right to independent expression, even at a good deal of risk. In either case, the objection falls to the ground.

We have fortunately a means of testing, with some fairness of estimate, the probable amount of this peril. It is generally admitted,—and certainly no German-American will deny,—that the most fruitful sources

of hostility and war in all times have been religious, not political. All merely political antagonism, certainly all which is possible in a republic, fades into insignificance before this more powerful dividing influence. Yet we leave all this great explosive force in unimpeded operation,—at any moment it may be set in action, in any one of those "pretty family scenes" which "Puck" depicts,—while we are solemnly warned against admitting the comparatively mild peril of a political difference! It is like cautioning a manufacturer of dynamite against the danger of meddling with mere edge-tools. Even with all the intensity of feeling on religious matters, few families are seriously divided by them; and the influence of political differences would be still more insignificant.

The simple fact is, that there is no better basis for union than mutual respect for each other's opinions; and this can never be obtained without an intelligent independence. "I would rather have a thorn in my side than an echo," said Emerson of friendship; and the same is true of married life. It is the echoes, the nonentities, of whom men grow tired; it is the women with some flavour of individuality who keep the hearts of their husbands. This is only applying in a higher sense what Shakspeare's Cleopatra saw. When her

handmaidens are questioning how to hold a lover, and one says,—

"Give way to him in all: cross him in nothing,"—

Cleopatra, from the depth of an unequalled experience, retorts,—

"Thou speakest like a fool: the way to lose him!"

And what "the serpent of old Nile" said, the wives of the future, who are to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves, may well ponder. It takes two things different to make a union; and part of that difference may as well lie in matters political as anywhere else.

XXIV.

WOMEN AS ECONOMISTS.

AN able lawyer of Boston, arguing the other day before a legislative committee in favour of giving to the city council a check upon the expenditures of the school committee, gave as one reason that this body would probably include more women henceforward, and that women were ordinarily more lavish than men in their use of money. The truth of this assumption

was questioned at the time; and, the more I think of it, the more contrary it is to my whole experience. I should say that women, from the very habit of their lives, are led to be more particular about details, and more careful as to small economies. The very fact that they handle less money tends to this. When they are told to spend money, as they often are by loving or ambitious husbands, they no doubt do it freely: they have naturally more taste than men, and quite as much love of luxury. In some instances in this country they spend money recklessly and wickedly, like the heroines of French novels; but as, even in brilliant Paris, the women of the middle classes are notoriously better managers than the men, so we often see, in our scheming America, the same relative superiority. Often have I heard young men say, "I never knew how to economize until after my marriage;" and who has not seen multitudes of instances where women accustomed to luxury, have accepted poverty without a murmur for the sake of those whom they loved?

I remember a young girl, accustomed to the gayest society of New York, who engaged herself to a young naval officer, against the advice of the friends of both. One of her near relatives said to me, "Of all the young girls I have ever known, she is the least

fitted for a poor man's wife." Yet from the very moment of her marriage she brought their joint expenses within his scanty pay, and even saved a little money from it. Everybody knows such instances. We hear men denounce the extravagance of women, while those very men spend on wine and cigars, on clubs and horses twice what their wives spend on their toilet. If the wives are economical, the husbands perhaps urge them on to greater lavishness. "Why do you not dress like Mrs. So-and-so?"—"I can't afford it."—"But *I* can afford it;" and then, when the bills come in, the talk of extravagance recommences. At one time in Newport that lady among the summer visitors who was reported to be Worth's best customer was also well known to be quite indifferent to society, and to go into it mainly to please her husband, whose social ambition was notorious.

It has often happened to me to serve in organizations where both sexes were represented, and where expenditures were to be made for business or pleasure. In these I have found, as a rule, that the women were more careful, or perhaps I should say more timid, than the men, less willing to risk any thing: the bolder financial experiments came from the men, as one might expect. In talking the other day with

the secretary of an important educational enterprise, conducted by women, I was surprised to find that it was cramped for money, though large subscriptions were said to have been made to it. On inquiry it appeared that these ladies, having pledged themselves for four years, had divided the amount received into four parts, and were resolutely limiting themselves, for the first year, to one-quarter part of what had been subscribed. No board of men would have done so. Any board of men would have allowed far more than a quarter of the sum for the first year's expenditure, justly reasoning that if the enterprise began well it would command public confidence, and bring in additional subscriptions as time went on. I would appeal to any one whose experience has been in joint associations of men and women, whether this is not a fair statement of the difference between their ways of working. It does not prove that women are more honest than men, but that their education or their nature makes them more cautious in expenditure.

The habits of society make the dress of a fashionable woman far more expensive than that of a man of fashion. Formerly it was not so ; and, so long as it was not so, the extravagance of men in this respect quite equalled that of women. It now takes other forms, but the habit is the same. There is not

a club-house in Boston furnished with such absence of luxury as the Women's Club rooms on Park Street: the contrast was at first so great as to seem almost absurd. The waiters at any fashionable restaurant will tell you that what is a cheap dinner for a man would be a dear dinner for a woman. Yet after all the test is not in any particular class of expenditures, but in the business-like habit. Men are of course more business-like in large combinations, for they are more used to them; but for the small details of daily economy women are more watchful. The cases where women ruin their husbands by extravagance are exceptional. As a rule, the men are the bread-winners; but the careful saving and managing and contriving come from the women.

XXV.

GREATER INCLUDES LESS.

I WAS once at a little musical party in New York, where several accomplished amateur singers were present, and with them the eminent professional, Miss Adelaide Phillips. The amateurs were first

called on. Each chose some difficult operatic passage, and sang her best. When it came to the great opera-singer's turn, instead of exhibiting her ability to eclipse those rivals on her own ground, she simply seated herself at the piano, and sang "Kathleen Mavourneen" with such thrilling sweetness, that the young Irish girl who was setting the supper-table in the next room forgot all her plates and teaspoons, threw herself into a chair, put her apron over her face, and sobbed as if her heart would break. All the training of Adelaide Phillips—her magnificent voice, her stage experience, her skill in effect, her power of expression—went into the performance of that simple song. The greater included the less. And thus all the intellectual and practical training that any woman can have, all her public action and her active career, will make her, if she be a true woman, more admirable as a wife, a mother, and a friend. The greater includes the less for her also.

Of course this is a statement of general facts and tendencies. There must be among women, as among men, an endless variety of individual temperaments. There will always be plenty whose career will illustrate the infirmities of genius, and whom no training can convince that two and two make four. But the general fact is sure. As no sensible man would

seriously prefer for a wife a Hindoo or Tahitian woman rather than one bred in England or America; so every further advantage of education or opportunity will only improve, not impair, the true womanly type.

Lucy Stone once said, "Woman's nature was stamped and sealed by the Almighty, and there is no danger of her unsexing herself while his eye watches her." Margaret Fuller said, "One hour of love will teach a woman more of her true relations than all your philosophizing." These were the testimony of women who had studied Greek, and were only the more womanly for the study. They are worth the opinions of a million half-developed beings like the Duchess de Fontanges, who was described as being as "beautiful as an angel and as silly as a goose." The greater includes the less. Your view from the mountain-side may be very pretty, but she who has taken one step higher commands your view and her own also. It was no dreamy recluse, but the accomplished and experienced Stendhal, who wrote, "The joys of the gay world do not count for much with happy women." *

* De l'Amour, par de Stendhal (Henri Beyle): "Les plaisirs du grand monde n'en sont pas pour les femmes heureuses," p. 189.

If a highly educated man is incapable and unpractical, we do not say that he is educated too well, but not well enough. He ought to know what he knows, and other things also. Never yet did I see a woman too well educated to be a wife and a mother; but I know multitudes who deplore, or have reason to deplore, every day of their lives, the untrained and unfurnished minds that are so ill-prepared for these sacred duties. Every step towards equalizing the opportunities of men and women meets with resistance, of course; but every step, as it is accomplished, leaves men still men, and women still women. And as we who heard Adelaide Phillips felt that she had never had a better tribute to her musical genius than that young Irish girl's tears; so the true woman will feel that all her college training for instance, if she has it, may have been well invested, even for the sake of the baby on her knee. And it is to be remembered, after all, that each human being lives to unfold his or her own powers, and do his or her own duties first, and that neither woman nor man has the right to accept a merely secondary and subordinate life. A noble woman must be a noble human being; and the most sacred special duties, as of wife or mother, are all included in this, as the greater includes the less.

XXVI.

A CO-PARTNERSHIP.

MARRIAGE, considered merely in its financial and business relations, may be regarded as a permanent co-partnership.

Now, in an ordinary co-partnership, there is very often a complete division of labour among the partners. If they manufacture locomotive-engines for instance, one partner perhaps superintends the works, another attends to mechanical inventions and improvements, another travels for orders, another conducts the correspondence, another receives and pays out the money. The latter is not necessarily the head of the firm. Perhaps his place could be more easily filled than some of the other posts. Nevertheless, more money passes through his hands than through those of all the others put together. Now, should he, at the year's end, call together the inventor and the superintendent and the traveller and the correspondent, and say to them, "I have earned all this money this year, but I will generously give you some of it,"—he would be considered simply

impertinent, and would hardly have a chance to repeat the offence the year after.

Yet precisely what would be called folly in this business partnership is constantly done by men in the co-partnership of marriage, and is there called "common-sense," and "social science," and "political economy."

For instance, a farmer works himself half to death in the hay-field, and his wife meanwhile is working herself wholly to death in the dairy. The neighbours come in to sympathize after her demise; and, during the few months' interval before his second marriage, they say approvingly, "He was always a generous man to his folks! He was a good provider!" But where was the room for generosity, any more than the member of any other firm is to be called generous when he keeps the books, receipts the bills, and divides the money?

In case of the farming business, the share of the wife is so direct and unmistakable that it can hardly be evaded. If any thing is earned by the farm, she does her distinct and important share of the earning. But it is not necessary that she should do even that to make her, by all the rules of justice, an equal partner, entitled to her full share of the financial proceeds.

Let us suppose an ordinary case. Two young people are married, and begin life together. Let us suppose them equally poor, equally capable, equally conscientious, equally healthy. They have children. Those children must be supported by the earning of money abroad, by attendance and care at home. If it requires patience and labour to do the outside work, no less is required inside. The duties of the household are as hard as the duties of the shop or office. If the wife took her husband's work for a day, she would probably be glad to return to her own. So would the husband if he undertook hers. Their duties are ordinarily as distinct and as equal as those of two partners in any other co-partnership. It so happens that the outdoor partner has the handling of the money; but does that give him a right to claim it as his exclusive earnings? No more than in any other business operation.

He earned the money for the children and the household. She disbursed it for the children and the household. The very laws of nature, by giving her the children to bear and rear, absolve her from the duty of their support, as long as he is alive who was left free by nature for that purpose. Her task on the average is as hard as his: nay, a portion of it is so especially hard that it is distin-

guished from all others by the name "labour." If it does not earn money, it is because it is not to be measured in money, while it exists—nor to be replaced by money, if lost. If a business man loses his partner, he can obtain another; and a man, no doubt, may take a second wife; but he cannot procure for his children a second mother. Indeed, it is a palpable insult to the whole relation of husband and wife when one compares it, even in a financial light, to that of business partners. It is only because a constant effort is made to degrade the practical position of woman below even this standard of comparison, that it becomes her duty to claim for herself at least as much as this.

There was a tradition in a town where I once lived, that a certain Quaker, who had married a fortune, was once heard to repel his wife, who had asked him for money in a public place, with the response, "Rachel, where is that ninepence I gave thee yesterday?" When I read in Scribner's Monthly an article deriding the right to representation of the Massachusetts women, who pay two millions of tax on one hundred and thirty-two million dollars of property,—asserting that they produced nothing of it; that it was only "men who produed wealth, and bestowed it upon these women;" that it was

"all drawn from land and sea by the hands of men whose largess testifies alike of their love and their munificence,"—I must say that I am reminded of Rachel's ninepence.

XXVII.

"ONE RESPONSIBLE HEAD."

WHEN we look through any business directory, there seem to be almost as many co-partnerships as single dealers; and three-quarters of these co-partnerships appear to consist of precisely two persons, no more, no less. These partners are, in the eye of the law, equal. It is not found necessary under the law, to make a general provision that in each case one partner should be supreme and the other subordinate. In many cases, by the terms of the co-partnership there are limitations on one side and special privileges on the other,—marriage settlements as it were; but the general law of co-partnership is based on the presumption of equality. It would be considered infinitely absurd to require, that, as the general rule, one party or the other should be in a state of *cover-*

ture, during which the very being and existence of the one should be suspended, or entirely merged and incorporated into that of the other.

And yet this requirement, which would be an admitted absurdity in the case of two business partners, is precisely that which the English common law still lays down in case of husband and wife. The words which I employed to describe it, in the preceding sentence, are the very phrases in which Blackstone describes the legal position of women. And though the English common law has been, in this respect, greatly modified and superseded by statute law; yet, when it comes to an argument on woman suffrage, it is constantly this same tradition to which men and even women habitually appeal,—the necessity of a single head to the domestic partnership, and the necessity that the husband should be that head. This is especially true of English men and women; but it is true of Americans as well. Nobody has stated it more tersely than Fitzjames Stephen, in his "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" (p. 216), when arguing against Mr. Mill's view of the equality of the sexes.

"Marriage is a contract, one of the principal objects in which is the government of a family.

"This government must be vested, either by law or by contract, in the hands of one of the two married persons."

[Then follow some collateral points, not bearing on the present question.]

"Therefore, if marriage is to be permanent, the government of the family must be put by law and by morals into the hands of the husband, for no one proposes to give it to the wife."

This argument he calls "as clear as that of a proposition in Euclid." He thinks that the business of life can be carried on by no other method. How is it, then, that when we come to what is called technically and especially the "business" of every day, this whole fine-spun theory is disregarded, and men come together in partnership on the basis of equality?

Nobody is farther than I from regarding marriage as a mere business partnership. But it is to be observed that the points wherein it differs from a merely mercantile connection are points that should make equality more easy, not more difficult. The tie between two ordinary business partners is merely one of interest: it is based on no sentiments, sealed by no solemn pledge, enriched by no home associations, cemented by no new generation of young life. If a relation like this is found to work well on terms of equality,—so well that a large part of the business of the world is done by it,—is it not absurd to suppose that the same equal relation cannot exist in the married partnership of husband and wife? And if law, cus-

tom, society, all recognize this fact of equality in the one case, why, in the name of common-sense, should they not equally recognize it in the other?

And, again, it must be far easier to assign a sphere to each partner in marriage than in business; and therefore the double headship of a family will involve less need of collision. In nine cases out of ten, the external support of the family can devolve upon the husband, unquestioned by the wife; and its internal economy upon the wife, unquestioned by the husband. No voluntary distribution of powers and duties between business partners can work so naturally, on the whole, as this simple and easy demarcation, with which the claim of suffrage makes no necessary interference. It may require angry discussion to decide which of two business partners shall buy, and which shall sell; which shall keep the books, and which do the active work, and so on; but all this is usually settled in married life by the natural order of things. Even in regard to the management of children, where collision is likely to come, if anywhere, it can commonly be settled by that happy formula of Jean Paul's, that the mother usually supplies the commas and the semicolons in the child's book of life, and the father the colons and periods. And as to matters in general, the simple

and practical rule, that each question that arises should be decided by that partner who has personally most at stake in it, will, in ninty-nine times out of a hundred, carry the domestic partnership through without shipwreck. Those who cannot meet the hundredth case by mutual forbearance are in a condition of shipwreck already.

XXVIII.

ASKING FOR MONEY.

ONE of the very best wives and mothers I have ever known once said to me, that, whenever her daughters should be married, she should stipulate in their behalf with their husbands for a regular sum of money to be paid them, at certain intervals, for their personal expenditures. Whether this sum was to be larger or smaller, was a matter of secondary importance—that must depend on the income, and the style of living; but the essential thing was, that it should come to the wife regularly, so that she should no more have to make a special request for it than her husband would have to ask her for a dinner. This lady's own

husband was, as I happened to know, of a most generous disposition, was devotedly attached to her, and denied her nothing. She herself was a most accurate and careful manager. There was everything in the household to make the financial arrangements flow smoothly. Yet she said to me, "I suppose no man can possibly understand how a sensitive woman shrinks from *asking* for money. If I can prevent it, my daughters shall never have to ask for it. If they do their duty as wives and mothers they have a right to their share of the joint income, within reasonable limits; for certainly no money could buy the services they render. Moreover, they have a right to a share in determining what those reasonable limits are."

Now, it so happened that I had myself gone through an experience which enabled me perfectly to comprehend this feeling. In early life I was for a time in the employ of one of my relatives, who paid me a fair salary but at no definite periods: I was at liberty to ask him for money up to a certain amount whenever I needed it. This seemed to me, in advance, a most agreeable arrangement; but I found it quite otherwise. It proved to be very disagreeable to ask for money: it made every dollar seem a special favour; it brought up all kinds of misgivings, as to whether he could spare it without

inconvenience, whether he really thought my services worth it, and so on. My employer was a thoroughly upright and noble man, and I was much attached to him. I do not know that he ever refused or demurred when I asked for money. The annoyance was simply in the process of asking; and this became so great, that I often underwent serious inconvenience rather than ask. Finally, at the year's end, I surprised my relative very much by saying that I would accept, if necessary, a lower salary, on condition that it should be paid on regular days, and as a matter of business. The wish was at once granted, without the reduction; and he probably never knew what a relief it was to me.

Now, if a young man is liable to feel this pride and reluctance toward an employer, even if a kinsman, it is easy to understand how many women may feel the same, even in regard to a husband. And I fancy that those who feel it most are often the most conscientious and high-minded women. It is unreasonable to say of such persons, "Too sensitive! Too fastidious!" For it is just this quality of finer sensitiveness which men affect to prize in a woman, and wish to protect at all hazards. The very fact that a husband is generous; the very fact that his income is limited—these may bring in conscience and

gratitude to increase the restraining influence of pride, and make the wife less willing to ask money of such a husband than if he were a rich man or a mean one. The only dignified position in which a man can place his wife is to treat her at least as well as he would treat a housekeeper, and give her the comfort of a perfectly clear and definite arrangement as to money matters. She will not then be under the necessity of nerving herself to solicit from him as a favour what she really needs and has a right to spend. Nor will she be torturing herself, on the other side, with the secret fear lest she has asked too much, and more than they can really spare. She will, in short, be in the position of a woman and a wife, not of a child or a toy.

I have carefully avoided using the word "allowance" in what has been said, because that word seems to imply the untrue and mean assumption that the money is all the husband's to give or withhold as he will. Yet I have heard this sort of phrase from men who were living on a wife's property or a wife's earnings; from men who nominally kept boarding-houses, working a little, while their wives worked hard—or from farmers, who worked hard, and made their wives work harder. Even in cases where the wife has no direct part in the money-making, the indirect part

she performs, if she takes faithful charge of her household, is so essential, so beyond all compensation in money, that it is an utter shame and impertinence in the husband when he speaks of "giving" money to his wife as if it were an act of favour. It is no more an act of favour than when the business manager of a firm pays out money to the unseen partner who directs the indoor business or runs the machinery. Be the joint income more or less, the wife has a claim to her honourable share, and that as a matter of right, without the daily ignominy of sending in a petition for it.

XXIX.

WOMANHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD.

I ALWAYS groan in spirit when any advocate of woman suffrage, carried away by zeal, says anything disrespectable about the nursery. It is contrary to the general tone of feeling among us, I am sure, to speak of this priceless institution as a trivial or degrading sphere, unworthy of the emancipated woman. It is rarely that anybody speaks in this

way; but a single such utterance hurts us more than any arguments of the enemy. For every thoughtful person sees that the cares of motherhood, though not the whole duty of woman, are an essential part of that duty, wherever they occur; and that no theory of womanly life is good for anything which undertakes to leave out the cradle. Even her school-education is based on this fact, were it only on Stendhal's theory that the sons of a woman who reads Gibbon and Schiller will be more likely to show talent than those of one who only tells her beads and reads Mme. de Genlis. And so clearly is this understood among us, that, when we ask for suffrage for women, it is almost always claimed that she needs it for the sake of her children. To secure her in her right to them; to give her a voice in their education; to give her a vote in the government beneath which they are to live,—these points are seldom omitted in our statement of her claims. Anything else would be an error.

But there is an error at the other extreme, which is still greater. A woman should no more merge herself in her child than in her husband. Yet we often hear that she should do just this. What is all the public sphere of woman, it is said,—what good can she do by all her speaking, and writing,

and action,—compared with that she does by properly training the soul of one child? It is not easy to see the logic of this claim.

For of what service is that child to be in the universe, except that he, too, may write and speak and act for that which is good and true? And if the mother foregoes all this that the child, in growing up, may simply do what the mother has left undone, the world gains nothing. In sacrificing her own work to her child's, moreover, she exchanges a present good for a prospective and merely possible one. If she does this through overwhelming love, we can hardly blame her; but she cannot justify it before reason and truth. Her child may die, and the service to mankind be done by neither. Her child may grow up with talents unlike hers, or with none at all; as the son of Howard was selfish, the son of Chesterfield was a boor, and the son of Wordsworth in the last degree prosaic.

Or the special occasion when she might have done great good may have passed before her boy or girl grows up to do it. If Mrs. Child had refused to write "An Appeal for that Class of Americans called Africans," or Mrs. Stowe had laid aside "Uncle Tom's Cabin," or Florence Nightingale had declined to go to the Crimea, on the ground that a woman's true work

was through the nursery, and they must all wait for that, the consequence would be that these things would have remained undone. The brave acts of the world must be done when occasion offers, by the first brave soul who feels moved to do them, man or woman. If all the children in all the nurseries are thereby helped to do other brave deeds when their turn comes, so much the better. But when a great opportunity offers for direct aid to the world, we have no right to transfer that work to other hands —not even to the hands of our own children. We must do the work, and train the children besides.

I am willing to admit, therefore, that the work of education, in any form, is as great as any other work; but I fail to see why it should be greater. Usefulness is usefulness: there is no reason why it should be postponed from generation to generation, or why it is better to rear a serviceable human being than to be one in person. Carry the theory consistently out: each mother must simply rear her daughter that she in turn may rear somebody else; from each generation the work will devolve upon a succeeding generation, so that it will be only the last woman who will personally do any service, except that of motherhood; and when her time comes it will be too late for any service at all.

If it be said, "But some of these children will be men, who are necessarily of more use than women," I deny the necessity. If it be said, "The children may be many, and the mother, who is but one, may well be sacrificed," it might be replied, that, as one great act may be worth many smaller ones, so all the numerous children and grandchildren of a woman like Lucretia Mott may not collectively equal the usefulness of herself alone. If she, like many women, had held it her duty to renounce all other duties and interests from the time her motherhood began, I think that the world, and even her children, would have lost more than ever could have been gained by her more complete absorption in the nursery.

The true theory seems a very simple one. The very fact that during one-half the years of a woman's average life she is made incapable of child-bearing, shows that there are, even for the most prolific and devoted mothers, duties other than the maternal. Even during the most absorbing years of motherhood, the wisest women still try to keep up their interest in society, in literature, in the world's affairs—were it only for their children's sake. Multitudes of women will never be mothers; and those more fortunate may find even the use-

fulness of their motherhood surpassed by what they do in other ways. If maternal duties interfere in some degree with all other functions, the same is true, though in a far less degree, of those of a father. But there are those who combine both spheres. The German poet Wieland claimed to be the parent of fourteen children and forty books; and who knows by which parentage he served the world the best?

XXX.

CHILDLESS WOMEN.

IT has not always been regarded as a thing creditable to woman, that she was the mother of the human race. On the contrary, the fact was often mentioned, in the Middle Ages, as a distinct proof of inferiority. The question was discussed in the mediæval Council of Maçon, and the position taken that woman was no more entitled to rank as human, because she brought forth men, than the garden-earth could take rank with the fruit and flowers it bore. The same view was revived by a Latin writer of 1595, on the thesis "*Mulieres non homines*

esse," a French translation of which essay was printed under the title of "*Paradoxe sur les femmes,*" in 1766. Napoleon Bonaparte used the same image, carrying it almost as far :—

"Woman is given to man that she may bear children. Woman is our property; we are not hers: because she produces children for us; we do not yield any to her: she is therefore our possession, as the fruit-tree is that of the gardener."

Even the fact of parentage, therefore, has been adroitly converted into a ground of inferiority for women; and this is ostensibly the reason why lineage has been reckoned, almost everywhere, through the male line only, ignoring the female; just as, in tracing the seed of some rare fruit, the gardener takes no genealogical account of the garden where it grew. The view is now seldom expressed in full force: the remnant of it is to be found in the lingering impression, that, at any rate, a woman who is not a mother is of no account; as worthless as a fruitless garden or a barren fruit-tree. Created only for a certain object, she is of course valueless unless that object be fulfilled.

But the race must have fathers as well as mothers; and, if we look for evidence of public service in great men, it certainly does not always lie in leaving chil-

dren to the republic. On the contrary, the rule has rather seemed to be, that the most eminent men have left their bequest of service in any form rather than in that of a great family. Recent inquiries into the matter have brought out some remarkable facts in this regard.

As a rule, there exist no living descendants in the male line from the great authors, artists, statesmen, soldiers, of England. It is stated that there is not one such descendant of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Butler, Dryden, Pope, Cowper, Goldsmith, Scott, Byron, or Moore; not one of Drake, Cromwell, Monk, Marlborough, Peterborough, or Nelson; not one of Strafford, Ormond, or Clarendon; not one of Addison, Swift, or Johnson; not one of Walpole, Bolingbroke, Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Burke, Grattan, or Canning; not one of Bacon, Locke, Newton, or Davy; not one of Hume, Gibbon, or Macaulay; not one of Hogarth or Reynolds; not one of Garrick, John Kemble, or Edmund Kean. It would be easy to make a similar American list, beginning with Washington, of whom it was said that "Providence made him childless that his country might call him Father."

Now, however we may regret that these great men have left little or no posterity, it does not occur

to any one as affording any serious drawback upon their service to their nation. Certainly it does not occur to us that they would have been more useful had they left children to the world, but rendered it no other service. Lord Bacon says that "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit to the public, have proceeded from unmarried or childless men; which, both in affection and means, have married and endowed the public." And this is the view generally accepted—that the public is in such cases rather the gainer than the loser, and has no right to complain.

Since, therefore, every child must have a father and a mother both, and neither will alone suffice, why should we thus heap gratitude on men who from preference or from necessity have remained childless, and yet habitually treat women as if they could render no service to their country except by giving it children? If it be folly and shame, as I think, to belittle and decry the dignity and worth of motherhood, as some are said to do, it is no less folly, and shame quite as great, to deny the grand and patriotic service of many women who have died and left no children among their mourners. Plato puts into the

mouth of a woman,—the eloquent Diotima, in the "Banquet,"—that, after all, we are more grateful to Homer and Hesiod for the children of their brain than if they had left human offspring.

SOCIETY.

"*Place the sexes in right relations of mutual respect, and a severe morality gives that essential charm to woman which educates all that is delicate, poetic, and self-sacrificing, breeds courtesy and learning, conversation and wit, in her rough mate; so that I have thought a sufficient measure of civilization is the influence of good women.*—EMERSON: Society and Solitude, p. 21.

XXXI.

THE EMPIRE OF MANNERS.

I WAS present at a lively discourse, administered by a young lady just from Europe to a veteran politician. "It is of very little consequence," she said, "what kind of men you send out as foreign ministers. The thing of real importance is that they should have the right kind of wives. Any man can sign a treaty, I suppose, if you tell him what kind of treaty it must be. But all his social relations with the nation to which you send him will depend on his wife." There was some truth, certainly, in this audacious conclusion. It reminded me of the saying of a modern thinker, "The only empire freely conceded to women is that of manners—but it is worth all the rest put together."

Every one instinctively feels that the graces and amenities of life must be largely under the direction of women. The fact that this feeling has been carried too far, and has led to the dwarfing of women's intellect, must not lead to a rejection of this important social sphere. It is too strong a power to be ignored. George Eliot says well, that "the commonest man, who has his ounce of sense and feeling, is conscious of the difference between a lovely, delicate woman, and a coarse one. Even a dog feels a difference in their presence." At a summer resort, for instance, one sees women who may be intellectually very ignorant and narrow, yet whose mere manners give them a social power which the highest intellects might envy. To lend joy and grace to all one's little world of friendship; to make one's house a place which every guest enters with eagerness and leaves with reluctance; to lend encouragement to the timid, and ease to the awkward; to repress violence, restrain egotism, and make even controversy courteous—these belong to the empire of woman. It is a sphere so important and so beautiful, that even courage and self-devotion seem not quite enough, without the addition of this supremest charm.

This courtesy is so far from implying falsehood, that its very best basis is perfect simplicity. Given a natu-

rally sensitive organization, a loving spirit, and the early influence of a refined home, and the foundation of fine manners is secured. A person so favoured may be reared in a log hut, and may pass easily into a palace; the few needful conventionalities are so readily acquired. But I think it is a mistake to tell children, as we sometimes do, that simplicity and a kind heart are absolutely all that are needful in the way of manners. There are persons in whom simplicity and kindness are inborn, and who yet never attain to good manners for want of refined perceptions. And it is astonishing how much refinement alone can do, even if it is not very genuine or very full of heart, to smooth the paths and make social life attractive.

All the acute observers have recognized the difference between the highest standard, which is nature's, and that next to the highest, which is art's. George Eliot speaks of that fine polish which is "the expensive substitute for simplicity," and Tennyson says of manners—

> "Kind nature's are the best: those next to best
> That fit us like a nature second-hand;
> Which are indeed the manners of the great."

In our own national history, we have learned to recognize that the personal demeanour of women may

be a social and political force. The slave-power owed much of its prolonged control at Washington, and the larger part of its favour in Europe, to the fact that the manners of Southern women had been more sedulously trained than those of Northern women. Even at this moment, one may see at any watering-place that the relative social influence of different cities does not depend upon the intellectual training of their women, so much as on the manners. And, even if this is very unreasonable, the remedy would seem to be, not to go about lecturing on the intrinsic superiority of the Muses to the Graces, but to pay due homage at all the shrines.

It is a great deal to ask of reformers, especially, that they should be ornamental as well as useful; and I would by no means indorse the views of a lady who once told me that she was ready to adopt the most radical views of the women-reformers, if she could see one well-dressed woman who accepted them. The place where we should draw the line between independence and deference, between essentials and non-essentials, between great ideas and little courtesies, will probably never be determined—except by actual examples. Yet it is safe to fall back on Miss Edgeworth's maxim in "Helen," that "Every one who makes goodness

disagreeable commits high treason against virtue." And it is not a pleasant result of our good deeds, that others should be immediately driven into bad deeds by the burning desire to be unlike us.

XXXII.

ARE WOMEN NATURAL ARISTOCRATS?

A CLERGYMAN'S wife in England has lately set on foot a reform movement in respect to dress; and, like many English reformers, she aims chiefly to elevate the morals and manners of the lower classes, without much reference to her own social equals. She proposes that "no servant, under pain of dismissal, shall wear flowers, feathers, brooches, buckles, or clasps, earrings, lockets, neck-ribbons, velvets, kid gloves, parasols, sashes, jackets, or trimming of any kind on dresses, and, above all, no crinoline; no pads to be worn, or frisettes, or *chignons*, or hair-ribbons. The dress is to be gored and made just to touch the ground, and the hair to be drawn closely to the head, under a round white cap, without trimming of any kind. The same system of dress

is recommended for Sunday-school girls, school-mistresses, church singers, and the lower orders generally."

The remark is obvious, that in this country such a course of discipline would involve the mistress, not the maid, in the "pain of dismissal." The American clergyman and clergyman's wife who should even "recommend" such a costume to a school-mistress, church singer, or Sunday-school girl, —to say nothing of the rest of the "lower orders,"— would soon find themselves without teachers, without pupils, without a choir, and probably without a parish. It is a comfort to think that even in older countries there is less and less of this impertinent interference: the costume of different ranks is being more and more assimilated; and the incidental episode of a few liveries in our cities is not enough to interfere with the general current. Never yet, to my knowledge, have I seen even a livery worn by a white native American; and to restrain the Sunday bonnets of her handmaidens, what lady has attempted?

This is as it should be. The Sunday bonnet of the Irish damsel is only the symbol of a very proper effort to obtain her share of all social advantages. Long may those ribbons wave! Meanwhile I think the fact that it is easier for the gentleman of the house

to control the dress of his groom than for the lady to dictate that of her waiting-maid,—this must count against the theory that it is women who are the natural aristocrats.

Women are no doubt more sensitive than men upon matters of taste and breeding. This is partly from a greater average fineness of natural perception, and partly because their more secluded lives give them less of miscellaneous contact with the world. If Maud Müller and her husband had gone to board at the same boarding-house with the Judge and his wife, that lady might have held aloof from the rustic bride, simply from inexperience in life, and not knowing just how to approach her. But the Judge, who might-have been talking politics or real estate with the young farmer on the doorsteps that morning, would certainly find it easier to deal with him as a man and a brother at the dinner-table. From these different causes women get the credit or discredit of being more aristocratic than men are; so that in England the Tory supporters of female suffrage base it on the ground that these new voters at least will be conservative.

But, on the other hand, it is women, even more than men, who are attracted by those strong qualities of personal character which are always the antidote

to aristocracy. No bold revolutionist ever defied the established conventionalisms of his times without drawing his strongest support from women. Poet and novelist love to depict the princess as won by the outlaw, the gipsy, the peasant. Women have a way of turning from the insipidities and proprieties of life to the wooer who has the stronger hand; from the silken Darnley to the rude Bothwell. This impulse is the natural corrective to the aristocratic instincts of womanhood; and though men feel it less, it is still, even among them, one of the supports of republican institutions. We need to keep always balanced between the two influences of refined culture and of native force. The patrician class, wherever there is one, is pretty sure to be the more refined; the plebeian class, the more energetic. That woman is able to appreciate both elements, is proof that she is quite capable of doing her share in social and political life. This English clergyman's wife, who devotes her soul to the trimmings and gored skirts of the lower orders, is no more entitled to represent her sex than are those ladies who give their whole attention to the "novel and intricate bonnets" advertised this season on Broadway.

XXXIII.

MRS. BLANK'S DAUGHTERS.

MRS. BLANK, of Far West—let us not draw her from the "sacred privacy of woman" by giving the name or place too precisely—has an insurmountable objection to woman's voting. So the newspapers say: and this objection is, that she does not wish her daughters to encounter disreputable characters at the polls.

It is a laudable desire, to keep one's daughters from the slightest contact with such persons. But how does Mrs. Blank precisely mean to accomplish this? Will she shut up the maidens in a harem? When they go out, will she send messengers through the streets to bid people hide their faces, as when an Oriental queen is passing? Will she send them travelling on camels, veiled by *yashmaks?* Will she prohibit them from being so much as seen by a man, except when a physician must be called for their ailments, and Miss Blank puts her arm through a curtain, in order that he may feel her pulse and know no more?

Who is Mrs. Blank, and how does she bring up her

daughters? Does she send them to the post-office? If so, they may wait a half-hour at a time for the mail to open, and be elbowed by the most disreputable characters, waiting at their side. If it does the young ladies no harm to encounter this for the sake of getting their letters out, will it harm them to do it in order to get their ballots in? If they go to hear Gough lecture, they may be kept half an hour at the door, elbowed by saint and sinner indiscriminately. If it is worth going through this to hear about temperance, why not to vote about it? If they go to Washington to the President's inauguration, they may stand two hours with Mary Magdalen on one side of them and Judas Iscariot on the other. If this contact is rendered harmless by the fact that they are receiving political information, will it hurt them to stay five minutes longer in order to act upon the knowledge they have received?

This is on the supposition that the household of Blank are plain, practical women, unversed in the vanities of the world. If they belong to fashionable circles, how much harder to keep them wholly clear of disreputable contact! Should they, for instance, visit Newport, they may possibly be seen at the Casino, looking very happy as they revolve rapidly in the arms of some very disreputable characters; they will

be seen in the surf, attired in the most scanty and clinging drapery, and kindly aided to preserve their balance by the devoted attentions of the same companions. Mrs. Blank, meanwhile, will look complacently on, with the other matrons: they are not supposed to know the current reputation of those whom their daughters meet "in society;" and, so long as there is no actual harm done, why should they care? Very well; but why, then, should they care if they encounter those same disreputable characters when they go to drop a ballot in the ballot-box? It will be a more guarded and distant meeting. It is not usual to dance round-dances at the ward-room, so far as I know, or to bathe in clinging drapery at that rather dry and dusty resort. If such very close intimacies are all right under the gas-light or at the beach, why should there be poison in merely passing a disreputable character at the City Hall?

On the whole, the prospects of Mrs. Blank are not encouraging. Should she consult a physician for her daughters, he may be secretly or openly disreputable; should she call in a clergyman, he may, though a bishop, have carnal rather than spiritual eyes. If Miss Blank be caught in a shower, she may take refuge under the umbrella of an undesirable acquaintance: should she fall on the ice, the woman who helps to

raise her may have sinned. There is not a spot in any known land where a woman can live in absolute seclusion from all contact with evil. Should the Misses Blank even turn Roman Catholics, and take to a convent, their very confessor may be secretly a scoundrel; and they may be glad to flee for refuge to the busy, buying, selling, dancing, voting world outside.

No: Mrs. Blank's prayers for absolute protection will never be answered, in respect to her daughters. Why not, then, find a better model for prayer in that made by Jesus for his disciples: "I pray Thee, not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil." A woman was made for something nobler in the world, Mrs. Blank, than to be a fragile toy, to be put behind a glass case, and protected from contact. It is not her mission to be hidden away from all life's evil, but bravely to work that the world may be reformed.

XXXIV.

THE EUROPEAN PLAN.

EVERY mishap among American women brings out renewed suggestions of what may be called the "European plan" in the training of young girls,—

the plan, that is, of extreme seclusion and helplessness. It is usually forgotten, in these suggestions, that not much protection is really given anywhere to this particular class as a whole. Everywhere in Europe the restrictions are of caste, not of sex. Even in Turkey, travellers tell us, women of the humbler vocations are not much secluded. It is not the object of the "European plan," in any form, to protect the virtue of young women, as such, but only of young ladies; and the protection is pretty effectually limited to that order. Among the Portuguese, in the island of Fayal, I found it to be the ambition of each humble family to bring up one daughter in a sort of lady-like seclusion: she never went into the street alone, or without a hood which was equivalent to a veil; she was taught indoor industries only; she was constantly under the eye of her mother. But, in order that one daughter might be thus protected, all the other daughters were allowed to go alone, day or evening, bareheaded or barefooted, by the loneliest mountain-paths, to bring oranges or firewood, or whatever their work may be —heedless of protection. The safeguard was for a class: the average exposure of young womanhood was far greater than with us. So in London, while you rarely see a young lady alone in the streets, the

housemaid is sent on errands at any hour of the evening with a freedom at which our city domestics would quite rebel; and one has to stay but a short time in Paris to see how entirely limited to a class is the alleged restraint under which young French girls are said to be kept.

Again, it is to be remembered that the whole "European plan," so far as it is applied on the Continent of Europe, is a plan based upon utter distrust and suspicion, not only as to chastity, but as to all other virtues. It is applied among the higher classes almost as consistently to boys as to girls. In every school under Church auspices, it is the French theory that boys are never to be left unwatched for a moment; and it is as steadily assumed that girls will be untruthful if left to themselves, as that they will do every other wrong. This to the Anglo-Saxon race seems very demoralizing. "Suspicion," said Sir Philip Sidney, "is the way to lose that which we fear to lose." Readers of the Brontë novels will remember the disgust of the English pupils and teachers in French schools at the constant espionage around them; and I have more than once heard young girls who had been trained at such institutions say, that it was a wonder if they had any truthfulness left, so invariable was the assumption that it was the nature

of young girls to lie. I cannot imagine any thing less likely to create upright and noble character, in man or woman, than the systematic application of the "European plan."

And that it produces just the results that might be feared, the whole tone of European literature proves. Foreigners, no doubt, do habitual injustice to the morality of French households; but it is impossible that fiction can utterly misrepresent the community which produces and reads it. When one thinks of the utter lightness of tone with which breaches, both of truth and chastity, are treated, even in the better class of French novels and plays, it seems absurd to deny the correctness of the picture. Besides, it is not merely a question of plays and novels. Consider, for instance, the contempt with which Taine treats Thackeray, for representing the mother of Pendennis as suffering agonies when she thinks that her son has seduced a young girl, his social inferior. Thackeray is not really considered a model of elevated tone, as to such matters, among English writers; but the Frenchman is simply amazed that the Englishman should describe even the saintliest of mothers as attaching so much weight to such a small affair.

An able newspaper writer praises the supposed

foreign method for the "habit of dependence and deference" that it produces; and because it gives to a young man a wife whose "habit of deference is established." But it must be remembered that, where this theory is established, the habit of deference is logically carried much farther than mere conjugal convenience would take it. Its natural outcome is the authority of the priest, not of the husband. That domination of the women of France by the priesthood which forms to-day the chief peril of the republic,—which is the strength of legitimism and imperialism, and all other conspiracies against the liberty of the French people,—is only the visible and inevitable result of this dangerous docility.

One thing is certain, that the best preparation for freedom is freedom; and that no young girls are so poorly prepared for American life as those whose early years are passed in Europe. The worst imprudences, the most unmaidenly and offensive actions, that I have ever heard of in decent society, have been on the part of young women educated in Europe, who have been launched into American life without its early training,—have been treated as children until they suddenly awakened to the freedom of women. On the other hand, I remember with pleasure, that a cultivated French mother, whose

daughter's fine qualities were the best seal of her motherhood, once told me that the models she had chosen in her daughter's training were certain families of American young ladies, of whom she had, through peculiar circumstances, seen much in Paris.

XXXV.

"FEATHERSES."

ONE of the most amusing letters ever quoted in any book is that given in Curzon's "Monasteries of the Levant," as the production of a Turkish Sultana who had just learned English. It is as follows:—

NOTE FROM ADILE SULTANA, THE BETROTHED OF ABBAS PASHA, TO HER ARMENIAN COMMISSIONER.

CONSTANTINOPLE, 1844.

MY NOBLE FRIEND,—Here are the featherses sent my soul, my noble friend, are there no other featherses leaved in the shop beside these featherses? and these featherses remains, and these featherses are ukly. They are very dear, who buyses dheses? And my noble friend, we want a noat from yorself; those you brought last tim, those you sees were very beautiful; we had searched; my soul, I want featherses again, of those featherses. In Kalada there is plenty of feather. Whatever

bees, I only want beautiful featherses; I want featherses of every desolation to-morrow.

(Signed) YOU KNOW WHO.

The first steps in culture do not, then, it seems, remove from the feminine soul the love of finery. Nor do the later steps wholly extinguish it; for did not Grace Greenwood hear the learned Mary Somerville conferring with the wise Harriet Martineau as to whether a certain dress should be dyed to match a certain shawl? Well! why not? Because women learn the use of the quill, are they to ignore "featherses"? Because they learn science, must they unlearn the arts, and above all the art of being beautiful? If men have lost it, they have reason to regret the loss. Let women hold to it, while yet within their reach.

Mrs. Rachel Howland of New Bedford, much prized and trusted as a public speaker among Friends, and a model of taste and quiet beauty in costume, delighted the young girls at a Newport Yearly Meeting, a few years since, by boldly declaring that she thought God meant women to make the world beautiful, as much as flowers and butterflies, and that there was no sin in tasteful dress, but only in devoting to it too much money or too much time. It is a blessed doctrine. The utmost extremes of

dress, the love of colours, of fabrics, of jewels, of "featherses," are, after all, but an effort after the beautiful. The reason why the beautiful is not always the result, is because so many women are ignorant or merely imitative. They have no sense of fitness; the short wear what belongs to the tall, and brunettes sacrifice their natural beauty to look like blondes. Or they have no adaptation; and even an emancipated woman may show a disregard for appropriateness, as where a fine lady sweeps the streets, or a fair orator the platform, with a silken or velvet train which accords only with a carpet as luxurious as itself. What is inappropriate is never beautiful. What is merely in the fashion is never beautiful. But who does not know some woman whose taste and training are so perfect that fashion becomes to her a means of grace instead of a despot, and the worst excrescence that can be prescribed—a *chignon*, a hoop, a panier—is softened into something so becoming that even the Parisian bondage seems but a chain of roses?

In such hands, even "featherses" become a fine art, not a matter of vanity. Are women so much more vain than men? No doubt they talk more about their dress, for there is much more to talk about; yet did you never hear the men of fashion discuss

boots and hats and the liveries of grooms? A good friend of mine, a shoemaker, who supplies very high heels for a great many pretty feet on Fifth Avenue in New York, declares that women are not so vain of their feet as men. "A man who thinks he has a handsome foot," quoth our fashionable Crispin, "is apt to give us more trouble than any lady among our customers. I have noticed this for twenty years." The testimony is consoling—to women.

And this naturally suggests the question, What is to be the future of masculine costume? Is the present formlessness and gracelessness and monotony of hue to last forever, as suited to the rough needs of a work-a-day world? It is to be remembered that the difference in this respect between the dress of the sexes is a very recent thing. Till within a century or so, men dressed as picturesquely as women, and paid as minute attention to their costume. Even the fashions in armour varied as extensively as the fashions in gowns. One of Henry III.'s courtiers, Sir J. Arundel, had fifty-two complete suits of cloth of gold. No satin, no velvet, was too elegant for those who sat to Copley for their pictures. In Puritan days the laws could hardly be made severe enough to prevent men from wearing silver-lace and "broad bone-lace," and shoulder-bands of undue width, and

double ruffs and "immoderate great breeches." What seemed to the cavaliers the extreme of stupid sobriety in dress, would pass now for the most fantastic array. Fancy Samuel Pepys going to a wedding of to-day in his "new coloured silk suit and coat trimmed with gold buttons, and gold broad lace round his hands, very rich and fine." It would give to the ceremony the aspect of a fancy ball; yet how much prettier a sight is a fancy ball than the ordinary entertainment of the period!

Within the last few years the rigour of masculine costume is a little relaxed; velvets are resuming their picturesque sway; and, instead of the customary suit of solemn black, gentlemen are appearing in blue and gold editions at evening parties. Let us hope that good sense and taste may yet meet each other, for both sexes; that men may borrow for their dress some womanly taste, women some masculine sense; and society may again witness a graceful and appropriate costume, without being too much absorbed in "featherses."

EDUCATION.

"*A great reverence for knowledge and the natural sense of justice urge me to encourage in my own sex that which is most worthy the aspirations of all. For, since wisdom is so great an ornament of the human race that it should of right be extended (so far as practicable) to each and every one, I did not see why this fairest of ornaments should not be appropriate for the maiden, to whom we permit all diligence in the decoration and adornment of herself.*"—ANNÆ MARIÆ À SCHURMAN EPISTOLÆ. (1638.)

XXXVI.

INTELLECTUAL CINDERELLAS.

WHEN, some thirty years ago, the extraordinary young mathematician, Truman Henry Safford, first attracted the attention of New England by his rare powers, I well remember the pains that were taken to place him under instruction by the ablest Harvard professors: the greater his abilities, the more needful that he should have careful and symmetrical training. The men of science did not say, "Stand off! let him alone! let him strive patiently until he has achieved something positively valuable, and he may be sure of prompt and generous recognition—

when he is fifty years old." If such a course would have been mistaken and ungenerous if applied to Professor Safford, why is it not something to be regretted that it was applied to Mrs. Somerville? In her case, the mischief was done: she was, happily, strong enough to bear it; but, as the English critics say, we never shall know what science has lost by it. We can do nothing for her now; but we could do something for future women like her, by pointing this obvious moral for their benefit, instead of being content with a mere tardy recognition of success, after a woman has expended half a century in struggle.

It is commonly considered to be a step forward in civilization, that whereas ancient and barbarous nations exposed children to special hardships, in order to kill off the weak and toughen the strong, modern nations aim to rear all alike carefully, without either sacrificing or enfeebling. If we apply this to muscle, why not to mind? and, if to men's minds, why not to women's? Why use for men's intellects, which are claimed to be stronger, the forcing process,—offering, for instance, many thousand dollars a year in gratuities at Harvard College, that young men may be induced to come and learn,—and only withhold assistance from the weaker minds of women? A

little schoolgirl once told me that she did not object to her teacher's showing partiality, but thought she "ought to show partiality to all alike." If all our university systems are wrong, and the proper diet for mathematical genius consists of fifty years' snubbing, let us employ it, by all means ; but let it be applied to both sexes.

That it is the duty of women, even under disadvantageous circumstances, to prove their purpose by labour, to "verify their credentials," is true enough ; but this moral is only part of the moral of Mrs. Somerville's book, and is cruelly incomplete without the other half. What a garden of roses was Mrs. Somerville's life, according to some comfortable critics! "All that for which too many women now-a-days are content to sit and whine, or fitfully and carelessly struggle, came naturally and quietly to Mrs. Somerville. And the reason was, that she never asked for any thing until she had earned it; or, rather, she never asked at all, but was content to earn." Naturally and quietly! You might as well say that Garrison fought slavery "quietly," or that Frederick Douglass's escape came to him "naturally." Turn to the book itself, and see with what strong, though never bitter, feeling, the author looks back upon her hard struggle.

"I was intensely ambitious to excel in something; for I felt in my own breast that women were capable of taking a higher place in creation than that assigned them in my early days, which was very low" (p. 60). "Nor . . . should I have had courage to ask any of them a question, for I should have been laughed at. I was often very sad and forlorn; not a hand held out to help me" (p. 47). "My father came home for a short time, and, somehow or other finding out what I was about, said to my mother, 'Peg, we must put a stop to this, or we shall have Mary in a strait-jacket one of these days'" (p. 54). "I continued my mathematical and other pursuits, but under great disadvantages; for, although my husband did not prevent me from studying, I met with no sympathy whatever from him, as he had a very low opinion of the capacity of my sex, and had neither knowledge of nor interest in science of any kind" (p. 57). "I was considered eccentric and foolish; and my conduct was highly disapproved of by many, especially by some members of my own family" (p. 80). "A man can always command his time under the plea of business: a woman is not allowed any such excuse" (p. 164). And so on.

At last in 1831—Mrs. Somerville being then fifty-one—her work on "The Mechanism of the Heavens" appeared. Then came universal recognition, generous if not prompt, a tardy acknowledgment. "Our relations," she says, "and others who had so severely criticized and ridiculed me, astonished at my success, were now loud in my praise." No doubt. So were, probably, Cinderella's sisters loud in her praise, when the prince at last took her from the chimney-corner, and married her. They had

kept for themselves, to be sure, as long as they could the delights and opportunities of life; while she had taken the place assigned her in her early days, — "which was very low," as Mrs. Somerville says. But, for all that, they were very kind to her in the days of her prosperity; and no doubt packed their little trunks, and came to visit their dear sister at the palace, as often as she could wish. And, doubtless, the Fairyland Monthly of that day, when it came to review Cinderella's "Personal Recollections," pointed out, that, as soon as that distinguished lady had "achieved something positively valuable," she received "prompt and generous recognition."

XXXVII.

FOREIGN EDUCATION.

THERE is a fashionable phrase which always awakens my inward protest,—"the advantages of foreign education." Every summer brings within my view a large class of people who have perhaps spent their youth in Europe, and then have taken Europe for their wedding-tour; and then, after a

year or two at home, have found it an excellent reason for going abroad again "to give the children the advantage of foreign education, you know." And, as it is in regard to girls that this advantage is especially claimed, it is in respect to them that I wish to speak.

In some ways, undoubtedly, the early foreign training offers an advantage. It is a thing of very great convenience to have the easy colloquial command of one or two languages beside one's own; and this can no doubt be obtained far more readily by a few years of early life abroad than by any method employed in later years at home. There are also some unquestionable advantages in respect to music, art, and European geography and history. The trouble is, that, when we have enumerated these advantages, we have mentioned all.

And, as a further trouble, it comes about that these things, being all that are better learned in Europe, are easily assumed, by what may be called our Europeanized classes, to be all that are worth learning, especially for girls. When, in such circles, you hear of a young lady as "splendidly educated," it commonly turns out that she speaks several languages admirably, and plays well on the piano, or sketches well. It is not needful for such an indorse-

ment that she should have the slightest knowledge of mathematics, of logic, of rhetoric, of metaphysics, of political economy, of physiology, of any branch of natural science, or of any language, or literature, or history, except those of modern Europe. All these missing branches she would have been far more likely to study, if she had never been abroad: all these, or a sufficient number of them, she would have been pretty sure to study at a first-class American "academy" or high school. But all these she is almost sure to have missed in Europe,—missed them so thoroughly, indeed, that she is likely to regard with suspicion any one who knows anything about them, as being "awfully learned."

Yet it needs no argument to show that the studies thus omitted by girls taught in Europe are the studies which train the intellect. That a girl should know her own powers of body and mind, should know how to observe, how to combine, how to think; that she should know the history and literature of the world at large, and in particular of the country in which she is to live,—this is certainly more important than that she should be able to speak two or three languages as well as a European courier, and should have nothing to say in any of them.

A very few persons I have known who contrived,

while living abroad, to keep a home atmosphere round their children, and who, by great personal effort, succeeded in giving to their girls that solid early training which is to be had in every high school in this country, but is only to be obtained by personal effort, and under great disadvantages, in Europe. Wiser still, in my judgment, were those who trusted America for the main training, but contrived early to secure for their children the needful year or two of foreign life, for the learning of languages alone. Perhaps we exaggerate, too, the absolute necessity of foreign study, even for modern languages. The Russians, who are the best linguists in Europe, are not in the habit of expatriating themselves for that purpose; and perhaps we have something to learn from them in this direction, as well as in the line of Professor Runkle's machine-shops.

XXXVIII.

TEACHING THE TEACHERS.

COTTON MATHER says of his father, Increase Mather, that, when he became president of Harvard College, it was from the desire to teach those who

were to teach others, or, as he expresses it, not to shape the building but the builders,—*non lapides dolare sed architectos.* It is curious to see that women are admitted more readily to this higher work than to the lower. Thus I know a lady who teaches elocution professionally, and has clerical pupils among others. One of these assures me that he finds his power and influence in the pulpit much increased through her instruction. Yet there is scarcely a denomination which would admit her into the pulpit: she can direct the builders, but can take no share in the building.

It sometimes occurred to me, when a member of the legislature of Massachusetts, that the little I knew of political economy was mainly due to the assiduous reading, in childhood, of Miss Martineau's stories founded on that science. Yet it would have been thought something very astounding were some such woman to have a seat in that legislature. So I have seen classes of young men and maidens, in a high school, reciting political economy out of Mrs. Fawcett's excellent text-book,—and sometimes reciting it to a woman; and yet, should any one of these boys ever become a member of "the Great and General Court," as the legislature is called in Massachusetts, he could not even invite this teacher, or

Mrs. Fawcett herself, to sit beside him and aid him with her advice. Can any one help seeing that this distinction is a merely traditional thing, and one that cannot last?

At the last teachers' convention which I attended, I heard a lady, Mrs. Knox, give an address on the best way of teaching English composition. There was assembled a great body of teachers, some five or six hundred; the church was crowded; and yet this lady faced the audience for some three-quarters of an hour—she being armed only with a piece of chalk and a blackboard—and held it in close attention. Without perceptible effort, and without a word or an attitude that was otherwise than womanly and graceful, she taught the teachers, men and women alike. I do not see how it is possible that the alleged supremacy of man can long withstand such influences.

It seems very appropriate to read from town after town, in reference to the late school elections, "The first lady to deposit her ballot was Miss ——, a teacher in the high school." Who else should be first? I do not think that men generally comprehend how absurd it is to an experienced teacher, who has for years been putting into the brains of dull boys all the activity they possess, to see those boys grow up to be men and voters, and decide what to do with

the money she pays in taxes, while she is set aside as "only a woman." Her pupils cannot make a speech in town-meeting, they cannot present a report on any subject, they cannot show any capacity of leadership without exhibiting the influence she has had over them. Yet they are now as entirely beyond her direct reach as if she were a hen who had hatched ducklings, and had lived to see them swimming away. But the teachers are worse off than the hens; because they have actually taught their ducklings to swim, and could swim themselves if permitted. After all, Horace Mann builded better than he knew. Every step in the training of women as teachers implies a farther step.

XXXIX.

"CUPID-AND-PSYCHOLOGY."

THE learned Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, England, is frequently facetious; and his jokes are quoted with the deference due to the chief officer of the chief college of that great university. Now it is known that the Cambridge colleges, and Trinity College in particular, are doing a great deal for the

instruction of women. The young women of Girton College and Newnham College—both of these being institutions for women, in or near Cambridge—not only enjoy the instruction of the university, but they share it under a guaranty that it shall be of the best quality; because they attend, in many cases, the very same lectures with the young men. Where this is not done, they sometimes use the vacant lecture rooms of the college; and it was in connection with an application for this privilege that the Master of Trinity College made his last joke—the last, at any rate, that has crossed the Atlantic. When told that the lecture-room was needed for a class of young women in psychology, he said, "Psychology? what kind of psychology? Cupid-and-Psychology, I suppose."

Cupid-and-Psychology is, after all, not so bad a department of instruction. It may be taken as a good enough symbol of that mingling of head and heart which is the best result of all training. One of the worst evils of the separate education of the sexes has been the easy assumption that men were to be made all head, and women all heart. It was to correct the evils of this, that Ben Jonson proposed for his ideal woman

"a learned and a manly soul."

It was an implied recognition of it from the other side when the great masculine intellect, Goethe, held up as a guiding force in his Faust "the eternal womanly" (*das ewige Weibliche*). After all, each sex must teach the other, and impart to the other. It will never do to have all the brains poured into one human being, and christened "man;" and all the affections decanted into another, and labelled "woman." Nature herself rejects this theory. Darwin himself, the interpreter of nature, shows that there is a perpetual effort going on, by unseen forces, to equalize the sexes, since sons often inherit from the mother, and daughters from the father. And we all take pleasure in discovering in the noblest of each sex something of the qualities of the other—the tender affections in great men, the imperial intellect in great women.

On the whole, there is no harm, but rather good, in the new science of Cupid-and-Psychology. There are combinations for which no single word can suffice. The phrase belongs to the same class with Lowell's witty denunciation of a certain tiresome letter-writer, as being, not his incubus, but his "pen-and-inkubus." It is as well to admit it first as last: Cupid-and-Psychology will be taught wherever young men and women study together. Not in the direct and

simple form of mutual love-making, perhaps; for they tell the visitor, at universities which admit both sexes, that the young men and maidens do not fall in love with each other, but are apt to seek their mates elsewhere. The new science has a wider bearing, and suggests that the brain is incomplete, after all, without the affections; and so are the affections without the brain. The very professorship at Harvard University which Rev. Dr. Peabody is just leaving, and which Rev. Phillips Brooks has been invited to fill, was founded by a woman, Miss Plummer; and the name proposed by her for it was "a professorship of the heart," though they after all called it only a professorship of "Christian morals." We need the heart in our colleges, it seems, even if we only get it under the ingenious title of Cupid-and-Psychology.

XL.

MEDICAL SCIENCE FOR WOMEN.

IN reading, the other day, a speech on the Medical Education of Women, it struck me that the most important reason for this education was one which the speaker had not mentioned,—the fact that the

medical profession stands for science; and that women peculiarly need science, since their natural bent is supposed to be a little the other way. The other professions represent tradition very generally: the lawyer must be bound by precedents; the clergyman generally admits that he must go back to his texts. But the physician claims, at least, to be a man of science, and stands for that before the world. Hence the sacredness with which his position has always been surrounded. The Florida Indians, according to the early voyagers, not only took the physician's medicine, but they took the physician himself internally, after his death. All other men were buried; but the body of the physician was burned, and his ashes mixed with water, by way of a permanent prescription.

At any rate, the physician himself popularly stands for science; and, in this point of view, his position is very noble. I have known physicians whose professed materialism was more elevated than most of what the world calls religion. To trace that wondrous power called life, which takes these particles of matter, and makes them think with thought, or glow with passion, or put forth an activity so intense as to be the parent of new life from generation to generation,—this study is some-

thing sublime. He who reverently ponders on this may call himself theist or atheist, he is yet worthy to be revered: if he can teach us he blesses us. "I touch heaven," said Novalis, "when I lay my hand on a human body;" and the popularity among physicians of that fine engraving of Vesalius standing ready for his first dissection, shows that they take a higher view of their vocation than the world sometimes admits.

It seems to me peculiarly important that women should have a share in these studies. They often have time enough. It takes more time for a woman to make herself charming than to make herself learned, Sydney Smith says; and he thinks it a pity that she should often hang up her brains on the wall in poor pictures, or waft them into the air in poor music, when they might be better employed. Yet a great physician, Dr. Currie, says in his letters that he always preferred to have an ignorant patient bring his wife with him, because he could always get more careful observation and quicker suggestions from the woman. This point lies directly in the line of medical education.

The study lies also directly in their path as prospective wives and mothers, and this alone would furnish a sufficient reason for it. A woman of

superior gifts, who had studied medicine, but never adopted it as a profession, told me that the mere domestic use of her knowledge had more than repaid her for all the trouble it had cost. For a man who should thus abandon the pursuit, it would be of comparatively little service, apart from the general training; but for a woman, if she fulfils the commoner duties of a woman's life, this early knowledge will always be a source of direct strength. This applies in a degree to surgery also; and I have always wondered, in view of the old proverb that a surgeon should have "a lion's heart and a lady's hand," why our professors do not oftener aim at developing this heart, if need be, in those who have the hand without training.

XLI.

MENTAL HORTICULTURE.

THERE was once a public meeting held, at the request of some excellent ladies, to consider the question whether it might be possible for roses and lilies to grow together in the same garden. Many of the ladies were quite used to gardening, and had

opinions of their own; but, as it was not proper for them to open their lips before people, they of course could not testify. So several respectable gentlemen—clergymen and professors—were invited to tell them all about it. Some of these gentlemen had seen a rose, and some had seen a lily, but it turned out that very few of them had ever happened to see a garden. Still, as they were learned men, they could give very valuable suggestions. One of them explained, that, as roses and lilies assimilated very different juices from the soil, they could not possibly grow in the same soil. Another pointed out, that, as they needed different proportions of sun and of air, they should have very different exposures, and therefore must be kept apart. Another, more daring, suggested, that, as God had put the two species into the same world, it was quite possible that they might grow in the same enclosure for a time, perhaps for about fourteen years, but that, if they were left longer together, they would certainly blight and destroy each other. All this seemed very conclusive; and the meeting was about to vote that roses and lilies should never be allowed to exist in the same garden, unless with a brick wall twenty feet high between.

But it so happened that a sensible gardener from a

distant State was present, and got up to say a word before the debate closed. "Bless your souls, my good people, what are you talking about?" said he. "Roses and lilies are already growing together by the thousand, all over the country, and you may as well close your discussion." Upon which the meeting broke up in some confusion: the brick wall was never built; but the clergyman went back to his study, the professor to his lecture-room, the physician to his patients, and all remained in the conviction that the gardener was a good sort of man, but strangely ignorant of scientific horticulture.

"Which things are an allegory." The writer has been reading the report, in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, of a recent debate on female education.

I suppose that those born and bred in New England can never quite abandon the feeling that this region should still lead the nation, as it once led, in all educational matters. For one, I cannot help a slight sense of mortification, when, in an assemblage of Boston professors, undertaking to discuss a simple practical matter, everybody begins in the clouds, ignoring the facts before everybody's eyes, and discussing as a question of theory only, what has long since become a matter of common practice. The mortification is not diminished when the common

sense has to be at last imported from beyond the borders of New England, in the shape of a college president from Central New York. To him alone it seems to have occurred to remind these dwellers in the clouds that what they persisted in treating as theory had been a matter of daily experience in half the large towns in New England for the last quarter of a century.

What is the question at issue? Simply this: New England is full of normal schools, high schools, and endowed academies. In the majority of these, pupils of both sexes, from fourteen to twenty-five or thereabouts, study together and recite together, living either at home or in boarding-houses, or in academic dormitories, as the case may be. This has gone on for many years, without cavil or scandal. As a general rule, teachers have testified that they prefer to teach these mixed schools; at any rate, the fact is certain, that the sexes, once united in schools of this grade, are very seldom separated again; while we often hear of the separate schools as being abandoned, and the sexes brought together. Certainly the experiment of joint education has been very extensively tried in all parts of New England; indeed, for schools of this kind, in most regions, the association of the sexes is the rule, their separation

the exception. Now, the only remaining question is: This being the case, will it make any essential difference if you widen the course of instruction a little, and call the institution a college?

This is really the only problem left to be solved; and yet on this question, thus limited, not a speaker at the above—except President White of Cornell University—had apparently a word to say. Every other speaker appeared to approach the general theme in as profound and blissful an ignorance as if he had lived all his life in Turkey or in France, or in some other country where no young man had ever recited algebra in the same room with a young woman since the world began.

EMPLOYMENT.

"*The non-combatant population is sure to fare ill during the ages of combat. But these defects, too, are cured or lessened; women have now marvellous ways of winning their way in the world; and mind without muscle has far greater force than muscle without mind.*"—BAGEHOT'S Physics and Politics, c. ii. § 3.

XLII.

"SEXUAL DIFFERENCE OF EMPLOYMENT."

I AM at a loss to understand an assertion made by Rev. Dr. Hedge, at an educational meeting in Boston, that "the course of civilization hitherto has tended to develop and confirm sexual difference of employment." He adds, according to the report in the *Daily Advertiser*, that, "the more civilized the country, the more the vocations of men and women divide: the more savage the nation, the more they blend and coincide."

With due respect for Dr. Hedge on many grounds, and especially as having been the first man to demand publicly in presence of the Harvard alumni the admission of women to the university, I must yet express great surprise at his taking what seems to me

so utterly untenable a position. To me it seems, on the contrary, that it is the savage period which is remarkable for the industrial separation of the sexes; and that every epoch of advancing civilization—as the present—blends them more and more. The fact would have seemed to me so plain as hardly to need more than simply to state it, but for the authority of Dr. Hedge upon the other side.

As we trace society back to savage life, what are the prevailing employments of the male sex? More and more exclusively, war and the chase. From these two vocations, monopolizing literally the whole active life of the savage man, the savage woman is almost absolutely excluded. Precisely at the point where the man's sphere leaves off, in each of these pursuits, the woman's sphere begins. Among American Indians, the man takes the captive, the woman tortures him. The man kills the deer, carries it till within sight of his own village, and then throws it down, that the squaw may go out and drag it in. Much that seems cruel and selfish in Indian life is the result, as Mrs. Jameson long since pointed out, of this complete separation of functions. The reason why the Indian woman carries the lodge-poles and the provisions on the march is that the man's limbs may be left free and agile for the far severer labours

of war and of the chase, from which she is excluded. The reason why she finally brings the deer to the camp is because he has had the more exhausting labour of hunting and killing it.

Contrast now this absolute "sexual difference of employment" with the greater and greater blending of civilized society—a blending, observe, which proceeds from both sides, and not from woman only. It is hard to say which is more remarkable, within the last half century—the way in which women have encroached on men's work, or the way in which men have encroached on women's.

In many mechanical and commercial pursuits—as printing and book-keeping—once almost monopolized by men, you now find a very large number of women. In some pursuits, as in education, the women have come to outnumber the men enormously, at least in America; in others, as telegraphy, they seem likely to do the same. We constantly hear of new channels opening. A friend of mine, the other day, just before addressing an audience on woman suffrage, stepped into a barber's shop, and to his great amazement was shaved by a woman. On inquiry, he learned for the first time, that a good many of that sex, mostly Germans, pursued this occupation in New York and elsewhere. Thus do the vocations of men and women

now "blend and coincide." On the other hand, the leading dressmaker of the world is a man; our bonnet-shops are largely conducted by men; the eminent hotel cooks, whose salaries exceed any paid by Harvard University, are men; and the lady who goes to rest in a sleeping-car on our railroads has her pillow smoothed and her curtains drawn, not by a chambermaid, but by a chamberman.

These are the facts which seem to me, I must say, quite fatal to Dr. Hedge's theory. And there is one thing worth noticing in the very different criticisms passed on men and on women as to these invasions of each other's province. If you call attention to the way in which men are everywhere taking part in women's work, people say approvingly, "To be sure! greater energy, greater skill! they do even women's work better than women themselves can." But if you point out that, on the other hand, women are also doing men's work, and in some cases—as in literature and lecturing—are actually obtaining higher prices than most men can obtain, the same people shake their heads disapprovingly, and say, "Unsexed; out of their sphere!" Now, if we lived in an age of chivalrous protection of women, it would be a different thing; but, as we live in an age of political economy, there is no reason why men alone

should have the benefit of its laws. If practical life is to be regarded as a game of puss-in-the-corner, I should recommend to each ejected puss to make for the best corner she finds open, without much deference to the theories of the sages.

XLIII.

MISS INGELOW'S PROBLEM.

IN a certain New England town I lived opposite the house of a thriving mechanic. His wife, a young and pretty woman, soon attracted the attention of my household by the grace and vivacity of her bearing, and the peculiar tastefulness of her own and her little boy's costume. On further acquaintance we found that she did every atom of her housework, washing and all; that she cut and made every garment for herself and her child; and that, finding her energies still unsatisfied, she took in sewing-work from a tailor's shop, and thus earned most of the money for their wardrobe. It may be well to add, to complete this story of New England social life, that her husband was one of the very earliest volun-

teers for the war of the Rebellion; that he went in captain, came out brigadier-general, and now holds an important government office.

There is nothing isolated or unexampled about this instance. My pretty and ladylike neighbour was only energetic, ready, capable, and ambitious, or, to sum it all up in the New England vernacular, "smart." Whatever she saw in society or life that was desirable for herself or her husband or her child, that she aimed at and generally obtained.

She "hadn't a lazy bone in her body;" and she never will have, though she may wear that body out prematurely by nervous tension. Wherever she goes, she will carry the same restless, tireless energy; and should her husband ever go to Congress or to the Court of St. James's, she will carry herself with perfect fearlessness and ease. And in all this she represents one great type of New England women.

When you ask of such a woman if she shrinks from work, it is as if you asked, Does a deer shrink from running, or a swallow from flying? She loves the work: indeed, she loves it, in my opinion, far too much, and sets a dangerous example. All theories of the natural indolence of man—or woman—fall defeated before the New England temperament, traditions, training, climate; before that "whip

of the sky," as a poet has sung, that urges us on. If, therefore, "household work is thought degrading" —and Miss Ingelow asserts too hastily that "nowhere is this so much the case as in America"—it certainly is not merely because it is work.

For myself, I doubt the fact, and demand the evidence. So far as the free States of the Union are concerned, it seems to me that household labour is thought less degrading than in England, and that the proportion of well-taught and ladylike women who contentedly do their own work is far greater in America, and keeps pace with the greater spread of average education. There is not a city in the land, I suppose—certainly not a village—where the housework in a large majority of the American-born families is not done by Americans; for the large majority are always mechanics and labourers, among whom, as a rule, the work is done by the wives and sisters and daughters. The wages of domestics are so much higher in America than in England—being almost double—that it is here a more serious expenditure to employ such aid.

I think, therefore, that we must be very cautious before we say that housework, as such, is held degrading in the free States. No doubt, American women feel, as their husbands and brothers feel,

that all work should be done by machinery, as far as possible, and that the washing-machine and the carpet-sweeper are as legitimate as the patent reaper or mower. They would be foolish if they did not. They also feel, as American men feel, that, in this great assemblage of all nations, the place for the American is rather in posts of command than in the ranks. In our ships you find men of all nations in the forecastle, but Americans in the cabin. In the regular army it is the officers, commissioned or non-commissioned, who are Americans. Go as far west as you please, you are surprised to find that the railway officials, superintendents, conductors, baggage-masters, are not merely American-born, but often New-England-born. The better average education tells. It is in the fitness of things that the under-work of household life also should be done by the under-class of foreign elements, and that it should be Americans who do the direction and guidance. Some such instinct as this is the explanation of much that Miss Ingelow takes for a contempt of household labour. An American woman does not despise such labour, properly speaking, any more than an American man despises mechanical labour. Both aim, if they can, to rise to occupations more lucrative and more intellectual.

It is not the labour, it is not even the household labour, to which objection is made. When you come to household labour for other people, done in a capacity recognized as menial,—ay, there's the rub! There is a widespread feeling that domestic service in other people's families is menial.

For one I have publicly remonstrated against the excess of this feeling, and think it is carried too far. Women will never compete equally with men, until they are willing, like men, to do any honest work without sense of degradation. This is one point where enfranchisement will help them. So long as a man bears in his hand the ballot, that symbol of substantial equality, his self-respect is not easily impaired by the humblest position. "A man's a man for a' that," he knows, before the law. But a woman, not having this, has only the usages of society to guide her; and, so long as society talks about "master," and "servant," I do not blame the American girl for refusing to accept such a position, —just as I do not blame, but applaud, the American man for refusing to wear livery. I only condemn them, in either case, when the alternative is starvation or sin. Then pride should yield.

But this is the conclusive proof that it is not the housework which is held degrading: the fact that

there is no difficulty in securing any number of American girls in our large country hotels, where they associate with their employers as equals, and call no man master. The fact that the proprietors of such hotels invariably prefer American "help" to Irish, shows that the philosophy of the whole question lies in a different direction from that indicated by our good friend Miss Ingelow. The evil of which she speaks does not properly exist: the real difficulty lies in a different direction, and cannot be settled till we see farther into the social organization that is to come.

XLIV.

SELF-SUPPORT.

IT is the English theory, that society needs a leisure class, not self-supporting, from whom public services and works of science and art may proceed. Even Darwin recognizes this theory. But how little is England doing for science and art, compared to Germany! and the German work of that kind is not done by a leisure class, but by poor men. I believe that the necessity of self-support, at least in the earlier

years of life, is the best training for manhood; and it does not seem desirable that women should be wholly set free from it.

A clever writer, on the other hand, maintains that women should never support themselves if it be possible honourably to avoid it. "Pecuniary dependence, degrading to men, is not only not undignified, but is the only thoroughly dignified condition, for women. In a renovated and millennial society all women will be supported by men,—will have no more to do with bringing in money than the lilies of the field." This statement is delightfully uncompromising, and it is a great thing to hear an extreme position so clearly and unequivocally put. Especially on a question so difficult as the labour and wages of women, it is particularly desirable to have each extreme worked out to its logical results.

It is certainly the normal condition of woman to be a wife and a mother. It is equally certain that this condition withdraws woman from the labour-market, during the prime of her life. The very years during which a man attains his highest skill, and earns his highest wages,—say, from twenty-five to forty,—are lost to woman, in this normal condition, so far as earning money is concerned. This is the main fact, as I judge, which keeps down the standard

of both work and pay among women, as a class. If men, as a class, were thus heavily weighted, the result would be as clearly seen. Where one sex brings into the market the full vigour of its life, and the other has only crude labour, or occasional labour, or broken labour, to offer, the result cannot be doubtful. Yet this is precisely the state of the competition between man and woman.

I believe, therefore, with this writer, that woman was not intended to be the equal competitor of man in business pursuits—or, indeed, to be self-supporting at all—during her career of motherhood. It is generally recognized as a calamity, when she is obliged to support herself at that time. Most people believe with Miss Mitford that "women were not meant to earn the bread of a family," and that men are. But to earn the bread of a family is not self-support: it is much more than self-support. And when this writer takes a step beyond, and says, "I think the necessity of earning her own living is always a woman's misfortune," then she seems to theorize beyond good sense, and to confuse things very different. Self-support is one thing: supporting seven small children is quite another thing.

That which should never be left out of sight is the essential dignity of labour. Woman during the

period of maternity is rightly excused from earning money; but it is because she is better occupied. She is not exempted in the character of lily of the field, but in the capacity of mother of a family. It is an important distinction. For labour in the lower sense, she substitutes what, in a higher and a more sacred sense, we still call "labour." She is not supported because she is a woman, but because, in her capacity as woman, she happens to have home-duties. If she had no such duties, there seems no reason why she should be supported any more than if she were a man. To be a wife and mother is a vocation, and one which usually for a time precludes all others. Merely to be a woman is not a vocation; and, so long as one can make no better claim on the world than that, the world has a right to demand something more. The Irishwoman who locks her little children into her one room, that she may go out to earn their bread, seems to me in a position no falser than that of the over-worked father who breaks himself down with toil that his daughters may live like the lilies of the field.

XLV.

SELF-SUPPORTING WIVES.

FOR one, I have never been fascinated by the style of domestic paradise that English novels depict,—half a dozen unmarried daughters round the family hearth, all assiduously doing worsted work and petting their papa. I believe a sufficiency of employment to be the only normal and healthy condition for a human being; and where there is not work enough to employ the full energies of all, at home, it seems as proper for young women as for young birds to leave the parental nest. If this additional work is done for money, very well. It is the conscious dignity of self-support that removes the traditional curse from labour, and woman has a right to claim her share in that dignified position.

Yet I cannot agree, on the other hand, with Celia Burleigh, when she says that her "True Woman" should be self-supporting, even in marriage. Woman's part of the family task—the care of home and children—is just as essential to building up the family fortunes as the very different toil of the out-

door partner. For young married women to undertake any more direct aid to the family income is in most cases utterly undesirable, and is asking of themselves a great deal too much. And this is not because they are to be encouraged in indolence, but because they already, in a normal condition of things, have their hands full. As, on this point, I may differ from some of my readers, let me explain precisely what I mean.

As I write, there are at work, in another part of the house, two paper-hangers, a man and his wife, each forty-five or fifty years of age. Their children are grown up, and some of them married: they have a daughter at home, who is old enough to do the housework, and leave the mother free. There is no way of organizing the labours of this household better than this: the married pair toil together during the day, and go home together to their evening rest. A happier couple I never saw; it is a delight to see them cheerily at work together, cutting, pasting, hanging: their life seems like a prolonged industrial picnic; and, if I had the ill-luck to own as many palaces as an English duke, I should keep them permanently occupied in putting fresh papers on the walls.

But the merit of this employment for the woman is, that it interferes with no other duty. Were she a

young mother with little children, and obliged by her paper-hanging to neglect them, or to leave them at a "day-nursery," or to overwork herself by combining too many cares, then the sight of her would be very sad. So sacred a thing does motherhood seem to me, so paramount and absorbing the duty of a mother to her child, that in a true state of society I think she should be utterly free from all other duties,—even, if possible, from the ordinary cares of housekeeping. If she has spare health and strength to do these other things as pleasures, very well; but she should be relieved from them as duties. And, as to the need of self-support, I can hardly conceive of an instance where it can be to the mother of young children any thing but a disaster. As we all know, this calamity often occurs; I have seen it among the factory operatives at the North, and among the negro-women in the cotton-fields at the South: in both cases it is a tragedy, and the bodies and brains of mother and children alike suffer. That the mother should bear and tend and nurture, while the father supports and protects,—this is the true division.

Does this bear in any way upon suffrage? Not at all. The mother can inform herself upon public questions in the intervals of her cares, as the father among his; and the baby in the cradle is a perpetual

appeal to her, as to him, that the institutions under which that baby dwells may be kept pure. One of the most devoted young mothers I ever knew—the younger sister of Margaret Fuller Ossoli—made it a rule, no matter how much her children absorbed her, to read books or newspapers for an hour every day; in order, she said, that their mother should be more than a mere source of physical nurture, and that her mind should be kept fresh and alive for them. But to demand in addition that such a mother should earn money for them, is to ask too much; and there is many a tombstone in New England which, if it told the truth, would tell what comes of such an effort.

XLVI.

THE PROBLEM OF WAGES.

TALKING, the other day, with one of the leading dressmakers of a New England town, I asked her why it was, that, when women suffered so much from scanty employments and low pay, there should yet be so few good dressmakers. "You are all overrun and worn out with work," I said, "all

the year round; every lady in town complains that there are so few of you; and it is the same in every town where I ever lived." She answered, as such witnesses always answer, "Women do not engage in occupations, as men do, for a lifetime. They expect only to continue in them for a year or two until they shall be married. I employ twelve girls, and not one of them expects to be a dressmaker for life. They work their ten hours a day, under my directions, and that is all."

Here lies the point of difference between the work of women and that of men, as a class; I mean, in their industrial pursuits, the work that earns money. Until we reach this point, or get a social philosophy that explains this, we are yet upon the surface only. The enfranchisement of woman will help us towards this, but will not, of itself, solve the problem of wages, because that depends on other than political considerations.

Why do the mass of men work? Not from taste, or for love of the work, but from conscious need. If they do not work, they and their families will starve. It is a necessity, and a permanent necessity. It will last all their lives, except in the case of a few who will "come into their property" by-and-by, like Mr. Toots—and their work is usually worth about

as much as his. We see this every day in the sons of rich men. Their fathers may bring them up to work, yet the mere fact that they are to be relieved from this compulsion within a dozen years is apt to paralyze their active faculties. They study law or medicine, or dabble in "business:" but they only play at the practice of their pursuits because there is no conscious necessity behind them. There are exceptions, but the exceptions are remarkable men.

Now, theorize as we may, the fact at present is that what thus paralyzes the energies of a few young men brings the same paralysis to many young women. Those whose parents are wealthy do not learn any regular occupation at all. Those whose parents are poor are obliged by necessity to learn one; yet they do not learn it as men in general learn theirs, but only as rich young men do, as if it were something to be followed for a time only,—till they "come into their property." To the rich young man the property is a landed estate, or some bank-stock. To the poor girl the prospective property is a husband. She expects to be married; and after that her money-making occupation is gone, and a new avocation—that of housekeeping and maternity—begins. It is no less arduous, no less honourable; but

it is different. In it her previous special training goes for nothing; and the thought of this must diminish her interest in the previous special training. It is only a temporary thing, like the few years' labour of a rich young man. There are exceptions, but they are extraordinary.

One reason why women's work is not at present so well paid as that of men is because it is not ordinarily so well done, especially in the more difficult parts. All employers, male and female, tell you this; and one great reason why it is not so well done is because women have not, as men have, a spring of permanent necessary to urge them on. How shall we supply the spring? This is the question we need to answer. As yet I do not think we have reached it. It does not seem to me to be, like the suffrage question, one easily settled. The reader will find very important facts and testimonies bearing upon it in Virginia Penny's "Cyclopædia of Female Employments." *

I confess myself unable, even after a good many years of study, to solve it fully; but a few propositions, I think, are sure, and may be taken as axioms to begin with. The general wages of

* Especially on pp. 110, 146, 235, 238, 243, 245, 247, 300, 318, 322, 367, 380.

women will always depend greatly on the amount of skill acquired by the mass of them. The mass of women will always look forward to being married, and, when married, to being necessarily withdrawn from the labour-market. Those who look forward to this withdrawal will not, as a rule, concentrate themselves upon learning their vocation as if it were for life; and, at any rate, when they leave it, they will take their skill with them, and so lower the average skill of the whole.

The problem, therefore, is how to equalize wages between a sex which works continually throughout life, driven by conscious necessity, and a sex which habitually works with temporary expectations, looking forward to a withdrawal from the labour-market in a few years, and which, when so withdrawn, carries its acquired skill with it, leaving only inexperience in its place. We all wish to solve the problem; every man would like to have his daughters as well paid for their labour as his sons. The ballot will help to elucidate it, no doubt, by putting woman's political protection, at least, into her own hands: but wholly to solve the problem will take the wisdom of several generations; nor will it be done, perhaps, until the greater problem of association *vs.* competition is also understood. It

certainly never will be solved by slighting the marriage-relation, or by advocating either "free love" or celibacy for women or for men.

XLVII.

THOROUGH.

"THE hopeless defect of women in all practical matters," said a shrewd merchant the other day, "is, that it is impossible to make them thorough." It was a shallow remark, and so I told him. Women are thorough in the things which they have accepted as their sphere—in their housekeeping and their dress and their social observances. There is nothing more thorough on earth than the way housework is done in a genuine New England household. There is an exquisite thoroughness in the way a milliner's or a dressmaker's work is done—a work such as clumsy man cannot rival, and can hardly estimate. No general plans his campaigns or marshals his armies better than some women of society manage the circles of which they are the centre. Day and night, winter and summer, at city or watering-place, year in

and year out, such a woman keeps open house for her gay world. She has a perpetual series of guests who must be fed luxuriously, and amused profusely; she talks to them in four or five languages; at her entertainments, she notes who is present and who absent, as carefully as Napoleon watched his soldiers; her interchange of cards, alone, is a thing as complex as the army muster-rolls: thus she plans, organizes, conquers, and governs. People speak of her existence as that of a doll or a toy, when she is the most untiring of campaigners. Grant that her aim is, after all, unworthy, and that you pity the worn face which has to force so many smiles. No matter: the smiles are there, and so is the success. I often wish that the reformers would do their work as thoroughly as the women of society do theirs.

No, there is no constitutional want of thoroughness in women. The trouble is, that into the new work upon which they are just entering they have not yet brought their thoroughness to bear. They suffer and are defrauded and are reproached, simply because they have not yet nerved themselves to do well the things which they have asserted their right to do. A distinguished woman, who earns perhaps the largest income ever honestly earned by any woman off the stage, told me the other day that she left all her busi-

ness affairs to the management of others, and did not even know how to draw a check on a bank. What a melancholy self-exhibition was that of a clever American woman, the author of half a dozen successful books, refusing to look her own accounts in the face, until they had got into such a tangle that not even her own referees could disentangle them to suit her! These things show, not that women are constitutionally wanting in thoroughness, but that it is hard to make them carry this quality into new fields.

I wish I could possibly convey to the young women who write for advice on literary projects, something of the meaning of this word "thorough" as applied to literary work. Scarcely any of them seem to have a conception of it. Dash, cleverness, recklessness, impatience of revision or of patient investigation, these are the common traits. To a person of experience, no stupidity is so discouraging as a brilliancy that has no roots. It brings nothing to pass; whereas a slow stupidity, if it takes time enough, may conquer the world. Consider that for more than twenty years the path of literature has been quite as fully open for women as for men, in America—the payment the same, the honour the same, the obstacles no greater. Collegiate education has, until very lately, been denied them; but how many men succeed as

writers without that advantage! Yet how little, how very little, of really good literary work has been done by American women! Young girls appear one after another: each writes a single clever story or a single sweet poem, and then disappears for ever. Look at Griswold's "Female Poets of America," and you are disposed to turn back to the title-page, and see if these utterly forgotten names do not really represent the "female poets" of some other nation. They are forgotten, as most of the more numerous "female prose writers" are forgotten, because they had no root. Nobody doubts that women have cleverness enough, and enough of power of expression. If you could open the mails and take out the women's letters, as somebody says, they would prove far more graphic and entertaining than those of the men. They would be written, too, in what Macaulay calls—speaking of Madame d'Arblay's early style—"true woman's English, clear, natural, and lively." What they need in order to convert this epistolary brilliancy into literature, is to be thorough.

You cannot separate woman's rights and her responsibilities. In all ages of the world she has had a certain limited work to do, and has done that well. All that is needed, when new spheres are open, is that she should carry the same fidelity into those.

If she will work as hard to shape the children of her brain as to rear her bodily offspring, will do intellectual work as well as she does housework, and will meet her moral responsibilities as she meets her social engagements, then opposition will soon disappear. The habit of thoroughness is the key to all high success. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. Only those who are faithful in a few things will rightfully be made rulers over many.

XLVIII.

TALKING AND TAKING.

EVERY time a woman does anything original or remarkable—inventing a rat-trap, let us say, or carving thirty-six heads on a walnut-shell—all observers shout applause. "There's a woman for you, indeed! Instead of talking about her rights, she takes them. That's the way to do it. What a lesson to these declaimers upon the platform!"

It does not seem to occur to these wise people that the right to talk is itself one of the chief rights in

America, and the way to reach all the others. To talk, is to make a beginning, at any rate. To catch people with your ideas, is more than to contrive a rat-trap; and Isotta Nogarola, carving thirty-six empty heads, was not working in so practical a fashion as Mary Livermore when she instructs thirty-six hundred full ones.

It shows the good sense of the woman suffrage agitators that they have decided to begin with talk. In the first place, talking is the most lucrative of all professions in America; and therefore it is the duty of American women to secure their share of it. Mrs. Frances Anne Kemble used to say that she read Shakspeare in public "for her bread;" and when, after melting all hearts by a course of farewell readings, she decided to begin reading again, she said she was doing it "for her butter." So long as women are often obliged to support themselves and their children, and perhaps their husbands, by their own labour, they have no right to work cheaply, unless driven to it. Anna Dickinson has no right to make fifteen dollars a week by sewing, if, by stepping out of the ranks of needlewomen into the ranks of the talkers, she can make a hundred dollars a day. Theorize as we may, the fact is, that there is no kind of work in America which brings such sure profits as public

speaking. If women are unfitted for it, or if they "know the value of peace and quietness," as the hand-organ-man says, and can afford to hold their tongues, let them do so. But if they have tongues, and like to use them, they certainly ought to make some money by the performance.

This is the utilitarian view. And when we bring in higher objects, it is plain that the way to get any thing in America is to talk about it. Silence is golden, no doubt, and like other gold remains in the bank vaults, and does not just now circulate very freely as currency. Even literature in America is utterly second to oratory as a means of immediate influence. Of all sway, that of the orator is the most potent and most perishable; and the student and the artist are apt to hold themselves aloof from it, for this reason. But it is the one means in America to accomplish immediate results, and women who would take their rights must take them through talking. It is the appointed way.

Under a good old-fashioned monarchy, if a woman wished to secure any thing for her sex, she must cajole a court, or become the mistress of a monarch. That epoch ended with the French Revolution. When Bonaparte wished to silence Madame de Staël, he said, "What does that woman want? Does she

want the money the government owes to her father?" When Madame de Staël heard of it she said, "The question is not what I want, but what I think." Henceforth women, like men, are to say what they think. For all that flattery and seduction and sin, we have substituted the simple weapon of talk. If women wish education, they must talk; if better laws, they must talk. The one chief argument against woman suffrage, with men, is that so few women even talk about it.

As long as talk can effect any thing, it is the duty of women to talk; and in America, where it effects every thing, they should talk all the time. When they have obtained, as a class, absolute equality of rights with men, their talk on this subject may be silent, and they may accept, if they please, that naughty masculine definition of a happy marriage—the union of a deaf man with a dumb woman.

SUFFRAGE.

"*No such phrase as virtual representation was ever known in law or constitution. It is altogether a subtlety and illusion, wholly unfounded and absurd. We must not be cheated by any such phantom or any other trick of law and politics.*"—JAMES OTIS, quoted by CHARLES SUMNER in Speech, March 7, 1866.

XLIX.

FOR SELF-PROTECTION.

I REMEMBER to have read, many years ago, the life of Sir Samuel Romilly, the English philanthropist. He was the author of more beneficent legal reforms than any man of his day, and there was in this book a long list of the changes he still meant to bring about. It struck me very much, that, among these proposed reforms, not one of any importance referred to the laws about women.

It shows—what all experience has shown—that no class or race or sex can safely trusts its protection in any hands but its own. The laws of England in regard to woman were then so bad that Lord Brougham afterwards said that they needed total reconstruction, if they were to be touched at all.

And yet it is only since woman suffrage began to be talked about, that the work of law reform has really taken firm hold. In many cases in America the beneficent measures are directly to be traced to some appeal from feminine advocates. Even in Canada, as stated the other day by Dr. Cameron, formerly of Toronto, the bill protecting the property of married women was passed under the immediate pressure of Lucy Stone's eloquence. And, even where this direct agency could not be traced, the general fact that the atmosphere was full of the agitation had much to do with all the reforms that took place. Legislatures, unwilling to give woman the ballot, were shamed into giving her something. The chairman of the Judiciary Committee in Rhode Island told me, that, until he heard women address the committee, he had not reflected upon their legal disabilities, or thought how unjust these were. While the matter was left to the other sex only, even men like Sir Samuel Romilly forgot the wrongs of woman. When she began to advocate her own cause men also waked up.

But now that they are awake, they ask, Is not this sufficient? Not at all. If an agent who has cheated you surrenders reluctantly one-half of your stolen goods, you do not stop there and say, "It is enough.

Your intention is honourable. Please continue my agent with increased pay." On the contrary, you say, "Your admission of wrong is a plea of guilty. Give me the rest of what is mine." There is no defence like self-defence, no protection like self-protection.

All theories of chivalry and generosity and vicarious representation fall before the fact that woman has been grossly wronged by man. That being the case, the only modest and honest thing for man to do is to say, "Henceforward have a voice in making your own laws." Till this is done, she has no sure safeguard, since otherwise the same men who made the old barbarous laws may at any time restore them.

It is common to say that woman suffrage will make no great difference; for that women will think very much as men do, and it will simply double the vote without varying the result. About many matters this may be true. To be sure, it is probable that on questions of conscience, like slavery and temperance, the woman's vote would by no means coincide with man's. But grant that it would. The fact remains—and all history shows it—that on all that concerns her own protection a woman needs her own vote. Would a woman vote to give her husband the power of bequeathing her children to the control

and guardianship of somebody else? Would a woman vote to sustain the law by which a Massachusetts chief justice bade the police take those crying children from their mother's side in the Boston court-room a few years ago, and hand them over to a comparative stranger, because that mother had married again? You might as well ask whether the coloured vote would sustain the Dred Scott decision. Tariffs or banks may come or go the same, whether the voters be white or black, male or female. But, when the wrongs of an oppressed class or sex are to be righted, the ballot is the only guaranty. After they have gained a potential voice for themselves, the Sir Samuel Romillys will remember them.

L.

WOMANLY STATESMANSHIP.

THE newspapers periodically express a desire to know whether women have given evidence, on the whole, of superior statesmanship to men. There are constant requests that they will define their position as to the tariff and the fisheries and the civil-service question. If they do not speak, it is naturally as-

sumed that they will for ever after hold their peace. Let us see how that matter stands.

It is said that the greatest mechanical skill in America is to be found among professional burglars who come here from England. Suppose one of these men were in prison, and we were to stand outside and taunt him through the window: "Here is a locomotive engine: why do you not mend or manage it? Here is a steam printing-press: if you know any thing, set it up for me! You a mechanic, when you have not proved that you understand any of these things? Nonsense!"

But Jack Sheppard, if he condescended to answer us at all, would coolly say, "Wait a while, till I have finished my present job. Being in prison, my first business is to get out of prison. Wait till I have picked this lock, and mined this wall; wait till I have made a saw out of a watch-spring, and a ladder out of a pair of blankets. Let me do my first task, and get out of limbo, and then see if your little printing-presses and locomotives are too puzzling for my fingers."

Politically speaking, woman is in prison, and her first act of skill must be in getting through the wall. For her there is no tariff question, no question of the fisheries. She will come to that by-and-by, if you

please ; but for the present her statesmanship must be employed nearer home. The "civil-service reform" in which she is most concerned is a reform which shall bring her in contact with the civil service. Her political creed, for the present, is limited to that of Sterne's starling in the cage,—"I can't get out." If she is supposed to have any common-sense at all, she will best show it by beginning at the point where she is, instead of at the point where somebody else is. She would indeed be as foolish as these editors think her if she now spent her brains upon the tariff question, which she cannot reach, instead of upon her own enfranchisement, which she is fast reaching.

The woman-suffrage movement in America, in all its stages and subdivisions, has been the work of woman. No doubt men have helped in it ; much of the talking has been done by them, and they have furnished many of the printed documents. But the energy, the methods, the unwearied purpose of the movement, have come from women : they have led in all councils ; they have established the newspapers, got up the conventions, addressed the legislatures, and raised the money. Thirty years have shown, with whatever temporary variations, one vast wave of progress towards success, both in this country and in Europe. Now, success is statesmanship.

I remember well the shouts of laughter that used to greet the anti-slavery orators when they claimed that the real statesmen of the country were not the Calhouns and Websters, who spent their strength in trying to sustain slavery, and failed, but the Garrisons, who devoted their lives to its overthrow, and were succeeding. Yet who now doubts this? Tried by the same standard, the statesmanship of to-day does not lie in the men who can find no larger questions before them than those which concern the fisheries, but in the women whose far-reaching efforts will one day make every existing voting-list so much waste paper.

Of course, when the voting-lists with the women's names are ready to be printed, it will be interesting to speculate as to how these new monarchs of our destiny will use their power. For myself, a long course of observation in the anti-slavery and woman-suffrage movements has satisfied me that women are not idiots, and that, on the whole, when they give their minds to a question, whether moral or practical, they understand it quite as readily as men. In the anti-slavery movement it is certain that a woman, Elizabeth Heyrick, gave the first impulse to its direct and simple solution in England; and that another woman, Mrs. Stowe, did more than any man, except

perhaps Garrison and John Brown, to secure its right solution here. There was never a moment, I am confident, when any great political question growing out of the anti-slavery struggle might not have been put to vote more safely among the women of New England than among the clergy, or the lawyers, or the college professors. If they have done so well in the last great issue, it is fair to assume that, after they have a sufficient inducement to study out future issues, they at least will not be very much behind the men.

But we cannot keep it too clearly in view that the whole question, whether women would vote better or worse than men on general questions, is a minor matter. It was equally a minor matter in case of the negroes. We gave the negroes the ballot, simply because they needed it for their own protection; and we shall by-and-by give it to women for the same reason. Tried by that test, we shall find that their statesmanship will be genuine. When they come into power, drunken husbands will no longer control their wives' earnings, and a chief justice will no longer order a child to be removed from its mother, amid its tears and outcries, merely because that mother has married again. And if, as we are constantly assured, woman's first duty is to her home

and her children, she may count it a good beginning in statesmanship to secure to herself the means of protecting both. That once settled, it will be time enough to "interview" her in respect to the proper rate of duty on pig-iron.

LI.

TOO MUCH PREDICTION.

"SEEK not to proticipate," says Mrs. Gamp, the venerable nurse in "Martin Chuzzlewit"—"but take 'em as they come, and as they go." I am persuaded that our woman-suffrage arguments would be improved by this sage counsel, and that at present we indulge in too many bold anticipations.

Is there not altogether too much tendency to predict what women will do when they vote? Could that good time come to-morrow, we should be startled to find to how many different opinions and "causes" the new voters were already pledged. One speaker wishes that women should be emancipated, because of the fidelity with which they are sure to support certain desirable measures, as peace, order, freedom,

temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come. Then the next speaker has his or her schedule of political virtues, and is equally confident that women, if once enfranchised, will guarantee clear majorities for them all. The trouble is, that we thus mortgage this new party of the future, past relief, beyond possibility of payment, and incur the ridicule of the unsanctified by committing our cause to a great many contradictory pledges.

I know an able and high-minded woman of foreign birth, who courageously, but as I think mistakenly, calls herself an atheist, and who has for years advocated woman suffrage as the only antidote to the rule of the clergy. On the other hand, an able speaker in the late Boston convention advocated the same thing as the best way of defeating atheism, and securing the positive assertion of religion by the community. Both cannot be correct: neither is entitled to speak for woman. That being the case, would it not be better to keep clear of this dangerous ground of prediction, and keep to the argument based on rights and needs? If our theory of government be worth any thing, woman has the same right to the ballot that man has: she certainly needs it as much for self-defence. How she will use it, when she gets it, is her own affair. It may be that she

will use it more wisely than her brothers; but I am satisfied to believe that she will use it as well. Let us not attribute infallible wisdom and virtue, even to women; for, as dear Mrs. Poyser says in "Adam Bede," "God Almighty made some of 'em foolish to match the men."

It is common to assume, for instance, that all women by nature favour peace; and that, even if they do not always seem to promote it in their social walk and conversation, they certainly will in their political. When we consider how all the pleasing excitements, achievements, and glories of war, such as they are, accrue to men only, and how large a part of the miseries are brought home to women, it might seem that their vote on this matter, at least, would be a sure thing. Thus far the theory: the fact being that we have but just emerged from a civil war which convulsed the nation, and cost half a million lives; and which was, from the very beginning, fomented, stimulated, and applauded, at least on one side, by the united voice of the women. It will be generally admitted by those who know, that, but for the women of the seceding States, the war of the Rebellion would have been waged more feebly, been sooner ended, and far more easily forgotten. Nay,

I was told a few days since by an able Southern lawyer, who was long the mayor of one of the largest Southern cities, that in his opinion the practice of duelling—which is an epitome of war—owes its continued existence at the South to a sustaining public sentiment among the women.

Again, where the sympathy of women is wholly on the side of right, it is by no means safe to assume that their mode of enforcing that sentiment will be equally judicious. Take, for instance, the temperance cause. It is usual to assume that women are a unit on that question. When we look at the two extremes of society—the fine lady pressing wine upon her New Year's visitors, and the Irishwoman laying in a family supply of whisky to last over Sunday—the assumption seems hasty. But grant it. Is it equally sure that when woman takes hold of that most difficult of all legislation, the license and prohibitory laws, she will handle them more wisely than men have done? Will her more ardent zeal solve the problem on which so much zeal has already been lavished in vain? In large cities, for instance, where there is already more law than can be enforced, will her additional ballots afford the means to enforce it? It may be so; but it seems wiser not to predict nor to anticipate, but to wait and hope.

It is no reproach on woman to say that she is not infallible on particular questions. There is much reason to suppose that in politics, as in every other sphere, the joint action of the sexes will be better and wiser than that of either singly. It seems obvious that the experiment of republican government will be more fairly tried when one-half the race is no longer disfranchised. It is quite certain, at any rate, that no class can trust its rights to the mercy and chivalry of any other, but that, the weaker it is, the more it needs all political aids and securities for self-protection. Thus far, we are on safe ground; and here, as it seems to me, the claim for suffrage may securely rest. To go farther in our assertions seems to me unsafe, although many of our wisest and most eloquent may differ from me; and, the nearer we approach success, the more important it is to look to our weapons. It is a plausible and tempting argument, to claim suffrage for woman on the ground that she is an angel; but I think it will prove wiser, in the end, to claim it for her as being human.

LII.

EDUCATION *via* SUFFRAGE.

I KNOW a rich bachelor of large property who fatigues his friends by perpetual denunciations of every thing American, and especially of universal suffrage. He rarely votes; and I was much amazed, when the popular vote was to be taken on building an expensive schoolhouse, to see him go to the polls, and vote in the affirmative. On being asked his reason, he explained that, while we laboured under the calamity of universal (male) suffrage, he thought it best to mitigate its evils by educating the voters. In short, he wished, as Mr. Lowe said in England when the last Reform Bill passed, "to prevail upon our future masters to learn their alphabets."

These motives may not be generous; but the schoolhouses, when they are built, are just as useful. Even girls get the benefit of them, though the long delay in many places before girls got their share came in part from the want of this obvious stimulus. It is universal male suffrage that guarantees schoolhouse and school. The most selfish man under-

stands that argument: "We must educate the masses, if it is only to keep them from our throats."

But there is a wider way in which suffrage guarantees education. At every election time, political information is poured upon the whole voting community, till it is deluged. Presses run night and day to print newspaper extras; clerks sit up all night to frank congressional speeches; the most eloquent men in the community expound the most difficult matters to the ignorant. Of course each party affords only its own point of view; but every man has a neighbour who is put under treatment by some other party, and who is constantly attacking all who will listen to his provoking and pestilent counter-statements. All the common-school education of the United States does not equal the education of election day; and, as in some States elections are held very often, this popular university seems to be kept in session almost the whole year round. The consequence is a remarkable average popular knowledge of political affairs—a training which American women now miss, but which will come to them with the ballot.

And in still another way, there will be an education coming to woman from the right of suffrage. It will come from her own sex, proceeding from highest to lowest. We often hear it said that, after enfran-

chisement, the more educated women will not vote, while the ignorant will. But Mrs. Howe admirably pointed out, at a Philadelphia convention, that, the moment women have the ballot, it will become the pressing duty of the more educated women, even in self-protection, to train the rest. The very fact of the danger will be a stimulus to duty, with women, as it already is with men.

It has always seemed to me rather childish, in a man of superior education, or talent, or wealth, to complain that when election day comes he has no more votes than the man who plants his potatoes or puts in his coal. The truth is, that under the most thorough system of universal suffrage the man of wealth or talent or natural leadership has still a disproportionate influence, still casts a hundred votes where the poor or ignorant or feeble man throws but one. Even the outrages of New York elections turned out to be caused by the fact that the leading rogues had used their brains and energy, while the men of character had not. When it came to the point, it was found that a few caricatures by Nast, and a few columns of figures in the *Times*, were more than a match for all the repeaters of the ring. It is always so. Andrew Johnson, with all the patronage of the nation, had not the influence of "Nasby" with his one newspaper. The whole

Chinese question was perceptibly and instantly modified when Harte wrote "The Heathen Chinee."

These things being so, it indicates feebleness or dyspepsia when an educated man is heard whining, about election time, with his fears of ignorant voting. It is his business to enlighten and control that ignorance. With a voice and a pen at his command, with a town-hall in every town for the one, and a newspaper in every village for the other, he has such advantages over his ignorant neighbours that the only doubt is, whether his privileges are not greater than he deserves. For one, in writing for the press, I am impressed by the undue greatness, not by the littleness, of the power I wield. And what is true of men will be true of women. If the educated women of America have not brains or energy enough to control, in the long-run, the votes of the ignorant women around them, they will deserve a severe lesson, and will be sure, like the men in New York, to receive it. And thenceforward they will educate and guide that ignorance, instead of evading or cringing before it.

But I have no fear about the matter. It is a libel on American women to say that they will not go anywhere or do any thing which is for the good of their children and their husbands. Travel West on any of our great lines of railroad, and see what

women undergo in transporting their households to their new homes. See the watching and the feeding, and the endless answers to the endless questions, and the toil to keep little Sarah warm, and little Johnny cool, and the baby comfortable. What a hungry, tired, jaded, forlorn mass of humanity it is, as the sun rises on it each morning, in the soiled and breathless railway car! Yet that household group is America in the making; those are the future kings and queens, the little princes and princesses, of this land. Now, is the mother who has undergone for the transportation of these children all this enormous labour, to shrink at her journey's end from the slight additional labour of going to the polls to vote whether those little ones shall have schools or rum-shops? The thought is an absurdity. A few fine ladies in cities will fear to spoil their silk dresses, as a few foppish gentlemen now fear for their broadcloth. But the mass of intelligent American women will vote, as do the mass of men.

LIII.

FOLLOW YOUR LEADERS.

"THERE go thirty thousand men," shouted the Portuguese, as Wellington, with a few staff-officers, rode along the mountain-side. The action of the leaders' minds, in any direction, has a value out of all proportion to their numbers. In a campaign, there is a council of officers,—Grant and Sherman and Sheridan perhaps. They are but a trifling minority, yet what they plan the whole army will do; and such is the faith in a real leader, that were all the restraints of discipline for the moment relaxed, the rank and file would still follow his judgment. What a few general officers see to be the best to-day, the sergeants and corporals and private soldiers will usually see to be best to-morrow.

In peace, also, there is a silent leadership; only that in peace, as there is more time to spare, the leaders are expected to persuade the rank and file, instead of commanding them. Yet it comes to the same thing in the end. The movement begins with certain guides, and, if you wish to know the

future, keep your eye on them. If you wish to know what is already decided, ask the majority; but, if you wish to find out what is likely to be done next, ask the leaders.

It is constantly said that the majority of women do not yet desire to vote, and it is true. But, to find out whether they are likely to wish for it, we must keep our eyes on the women who lead their sex. The representative women,—those who naturally stand for the rest, those most eminent for knowledge and self-devotion,—how do they view the thing? The rank and file do not yet demand the ballot, you say; but how is it with the general officers?

Now, it is a remarkable fact, about which those who have watched this movement for twenty years can hardly be mistaken, that almost any woman who reaches a certain point of intellectual or moral development will presently be found desiring the ballot for her sex. If this be so, it predicts the future. It is the judgment of Grant and Sherman and Sheridan, as against that of the average private soldier of the Two Hundredth Infantry. Set aside, if you please, the specialists of this particular agitation,—those who were first known to the public through its advocacy. There is no just reason why they should be set aside, yet concede that for a moment. The fact remains that the ablest women in the land—those who were

recognized as ablest in other spheres, before they took this particular duty upon them—are extremely apt to assume this cross when they reach a certain stage of development.

When Margaret Fuller first came forward into literature, she supposed that literature was all she wanted. It was not till she came to write upon woman's position that she discovered what woman needed. Clara Barton, driving her ambulance or her supply-waggon at the battle's edge, did not foresee, perhaps, that she should make that touching appeal, when the battle was over, imploring her own enfranchisement from the soldiers she had befriended. Lydia Maria Child, Julia Ward Howe, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Louisa Alcott, came to the claim for the ballot earlier than a million others, because they were the intellectual leaders of American womanhood. They saw farthest, because they were in the highest place. They were the recognized representatives of their sex before they gave in their adhesion to the new demand. Their judgment is as the judgment of the council of officers; while Flora McFlimsey's opinion is as the opinion of John Smith, unassigned recruit. But, if the generals make arrangements for a battle, the chance is that John Smith will have to take a hand in it, or else run away.

It is a rare thing for the petition for suffrage from

any town to comprise the majority of women in that town. It makes no difference: if there are few women in the town who want to vote, there is as much propriety in their voting as if there were ten millions, so long as the majority are equally protected in their right to stay at home. But, when the names of petitioners come to be weighed as well as counted, the character, the purity, the intelligence, the social and domestic value of the petitioners is seldom denied. The women who wish to vote are not the idle, the ignorant, the narrow-minded, or the vicious; they are not "the dangerous classes:" they represent the best class in the community, when tried by the highest standard. They are the natural leaders. What they now see to be right will also be perceived even by the foolish and the ignorant by-and-by.

In a poultry-yard in spring, when the first brood of ducklings go toddling to the water-side, no doubt all the younger or feebler broods, just hatched out of similar eggs, think these innovators dreadfully mistaken. "You are out of place," they feebly pipe. "See how happy we are in our safe nests! Perhaps, by-and-by, when properly introduced into society, we may run about a little on land, but to swim!—never!" Meanwhile their elder kindred are splashing and diving in ecstasy; and, so surely as they are born

ducklings, all the rest will swim in their turn. The instinct of the first duck solves the problem for all the rest. It is a mere question of time. Sooner or later, all the broods in the most conservative yard will follow their leaders.

LIV.

HOW TO MAKE WOMEN UNDERSTAND POLITICS.

AN English member of Parliament said in a speech, some years ago, that the stupidest man had a clearer understanding of political questions than the brightest woman. He did not find it convenient to say what must be the condition of a nation which for many years has had a woman for its sovereign; but he certainly said bluntly what many men feel. It is not indeed very hard to find the source of this feeling. It is not merely that women are inexperienced in questions of finance or administrative practice, for many men are equally ignorant of these. But it is undoubtedly true of a large class of more fundamental questions,—as, for instance, of some now pending at Washington,—which even many clear-headed women find it hard to understand, while men of far less general training comprehend them entirely. Questions of the distribution of power, for instance,

between the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government—or between the United States government and those of the separate States —belong to the class I mean. Many women of great intelligence show a hazy indistinctness of views when the question arises whether it is the business of the General Government to preserve order at the voting-places at a congressional election, for instance, as the Republicans hold; or whether it should be left absolutely in the hands of the State officials, as the Democrats maintain. Most women would probably say that so long as order was preserved, it made very little difference who did it. Yet, if one goes into a shoe-shop or a blacksmith's shop, one may hear just these questions discussed in all their bearings by uneducated men, and it will be seen that they involve a principle. Why is this difference? Does it show some constitutional inferiority in women as to this particular faculty?

The question is best solved by considering a case somewhat parallel. The South Carolina negroes were considered very stupid, even by many who knew them; and they certainly were densely ignorant on many subjects. Put face to face with a difficult point of finance legislation, I think they would have been found to know even less about it than I do. Yet the abolition of slavery was held in those days by many

great statesmen to be a subject so difficult that they shrank from discussing it; and nevertheless I used to find that these ignorant men understood it quite clearly in all its bearings. Offer a bit of sophistry to them, try to blind them with false logic on this subject, and they would detect it as promptly, and answer it as keenly, as Garrison or Phillips would have done; and, indeed, they would give very much the same answers. What was the reason? Not that they were half wise and half stupid; but that they were dull where their own interests had not trained them, and they were sharp and keen where their own interests were concerned.

I have no doubt that it will be so with women when they vote. About some things they will be slow to learn; but, about all that immediately concerns themselves, they will know more at the very beginning than many wise men have learned since the world began. How long it took for English-speaking men to correct, even partially, the iniquities of the old common law!—but a parliament of women would have set aside at a single sitting the alleged right of the husband to correct his wife with a stick no bigger than his thumb. It took the men of a certain State of this Union a good many years to see that it was an outrage to confiscate to the State one-half the property of a man who died childless, leaving

his widow only the other half; but a legislature of women would have annihilated that enormity by a single day's work. I have never seen reason to believe that women on general questions would act more wisely or more conscientiously, as a rule, than men: but self-preservation is a wonderful quickener of the brain; and, in all questions bearing on their own rights and opportunities as women, it is they who will prove shrewd and keen, and men who will prove obtuse, as indeed they have usually been.

Another point that adds force to this is the fact that wherever women, by their special position, have more at stake than usual in public affairs, even as now organized, they are apt to be equal to the occasion. When the men of South Carolina were ready to go to war for the "States-Rights" doctrines of Calhoun, the women of that State had also those doctrines at their fingers'-ends. At Washington, where politics make the breath of life, you will often find the wives of members of Congress following the debates, and noting every point gained or lost, because these are matters in which they and their families are personally concerned; and, as for that army of women employed in the "departments" of the government, they are politicians every one, because their bread depends upon it.

The inference is, that, if women as a class are now

unfitted for politics, it is because they have not that pressure of personal interest and responsibility by which men are unconsciously trained. Give this, and self-interest will do the rest; aided by that power of conscience and affection which is certainly not less in them than in men, even if we claim no more. A young lady of my acquaintance opposed woman suffrage in conversation on various grounds, one of which was that it would, if enacted, compel her to read the newspapers, which she greatly disliked. I pleaded that this was not a fatal objection; since many men voted "early and often" without reading them, and in fact without knowing how to read at all. She said, in reply, that this might do for men, but that women were far more conscientious, and, if they were once compelled to vote, they would wish to know what they were voting for. This seemed to me to contain the whole philosophy of the matter; and I respected the keenness of her suggestion, though it led me to an opposite conclusion.

LV.

"INFERIOR TO MAN, AND NEAR TO ANGELS."

IF it were anywhere the custom to disfranchise persons of superior virtue because of their virtue, and to present others with the ballot, simply because they had been in the State Prison—then the exclusion of women from political rights would be a high compliment, no doubt. But I can find no record in history of any such legislation, unless so far as it is contained in the doubtful tradition of the Tuscan city of Pistoia, where men are said to have been ennobled as a punishment for crime. Among us crime may often be a covert means of political prominence, but it is not the ostensible ground; nor are people habitually struck from the voting-lists for performing some rare and eminent service, such as saving human life, or reading every word of a Presidential message. If a man has been President of the United States, we do not disfranchise him thenceforward; if he has been governor, we do not declare him thenceforth ineligible to the office of United States senator. On the contrary, the supposed reward of high merit is to give higher civic privileges. Sometimes these are even

forced on unwilling recipients, as when Plymouth Colony in 1633 imposed a fine of twenty pounds on any one who should refuse the office of governor.

It is utterly contrary to all tradition and precedent, therefore, to suppose that women have been hitherto disfranchised because of any supposed superiority. Indeed, the theory is self-annihilating, and involves all supporters in hopeless inconsistency. Thus the Southern slaveholders were wont to argue that a negro was only blest when a slave, and there was no such inhumanity as to free him. Then, if a slave happened to save his master's life, he was rewarded by emancipation immediately, amid general applause. The act refuted the theory. And so, every time we have disfranchised a rebel, or presented some eminent foreigner with the freedom of a city, we have recognized that enfranchisement, after all, means honour, and disfranchisement implies disgrace.

I do not see how any woman can help a thrill of indignation, when she first opens her eyes to the fact that it is really contempt, not reverence, that has so long kept her sex from an equal share of legal, political, and educational rights. In spite of the duty paid to individual women as mothers, in spite of the reverence paid by the Greeks and the Germanic races to certain women as priestesses and sibyls, the fact remains that this sex has been generally recog-

nized, in past ages of the human race, as stamped by hopeless inferiority, not by angelic superiority. This is carried so far, that a certain taint of actual inferiority is held to attach to women in barbarous nations. Among certain Indian tribes, the service of the gods is defiled if a woman but touches the implements of sacrifice ; and a Turk apologizes to a Christian physician for the mention of the women of his family, in the phrases used to soften the mention of any degrading creature. Mr. Leland tells us that among the English gipsies any object that a woman treads upon, or sweeps with the skirts of her dress, is destroyed or made away with in some way, as unfit for use. In reading the history of manners, it is easy to trace the steps from this degradation up to the point now attained, such as it is. Yet even the habit of physiological contempt is not gone, as readers of late controversies on "Sex in Education" know full well ; and I do not see how any one can read history without seeing, all around us, in society, education, and politics, the tradition of inferiority. Many laws and usages which in themselves might not strike all women as intrinsically worth striving for—as the exclusion of women from colleges or from the ballot-box—assume great importance to a woman's self-respect, when she sees in these the plain survival of the same contempt that once took much grosser forms.

And it must be remembered that in civilized communities the cynics, who still frankly express this utter contempt, are better friends to women than the flatterers, who conceal it in the drawing-room, and only utter it freely in the lecture-room, the club, and the *North American Review*. Contempt at least arouses pride and energy. To be sure, in the face of history, the contemptuous tone in regard to women seems to me untrue, unfair, and dastardly; but, like any other extreme injustice, it leads to reaction. It helps to awaken women from that shallow dream of self-complacency into which flattery lulls them. There is something tonic in the manly arrogance of Fitzjames Stephen, who derides the thought that the marriage contract can be treated as in any sense a contract between equals; but there is something that debilitates in the dulcet counsel given by an anonymous gentleman, in an old volume of the *Ladies' Magazine* that lies before me—"She ought to present herself as a being made to please, to love, and to seek support; *a being inferior to man, and near to angels.*"

OBJECTIONS TO SUFFRAGE.

"*When you were weak and I was strong, I toiled for you. Now you are strong and I am weak. Because of my work for you, I ask your aid. I ask the ballot for myself and my sex. As I stood by you, I pray you stand by me and mine.*"—CLARA BARTON.

[Appeal to the returned soldiers of the United States, written from Geneva, Switzerland, by Clara Barton, invalided by long service in the hospitals and on the field during the civil war.]

LVI.

THE FACT OF SEX.

IT is constantly said that the advocates of woman suffrage ignore the fact of sex. On the contrary, they seem to me to be the only people who do not ignore it.

Were there no such thing as sexual difference, the wrong done to woman by disfranchisement would be far less. It is precisely because her traits, habits, needs, and probable demands are distinct from those of man, that she is not, never was, never can, and never will be, justly represented by him. It is not merely that a vast number of human individuals are disfranchised; it is not even because in many of

our States the disfranchisement extends to a majority, that the evil is so great; it is not merely that we disfranchise so many units and tens: but we exclude a special element, a peculiar power, a distinct interest —in a word, a sex.

Whether this sex is more or less wise, more or less important, than the other sex, does not affect the argument: it is a sex, and, being such, is more absolutely distinct from the other than is any mere race from any other race. The more you emphasize the fact of sex, the more you strengthen our argument. If the white man cannot justly represent the negro, — although the two races are now so amalgamated that not even the microscope can always decide to which race one belongs, — how impossible that one sex should stand in legislation for the other sex!

This is so clear, that, so soon as it is stated, there is a shifting of the ground. "But consider the danger of introducing the sexual influence into legislation!" . . . . Then we are sure to be confronted with the case of Miss Vinnie Ream, the sculptor. See how that beguiling damsel cajoled all Congress into buying poor statues! they say. If one woman could do so much, how would it be with one hundred? Precisely the Irishman's argument against the use of pillows: he had put one feather on a rock, and

found it a very uncomfortable support. Grant, for the sake of argument, that Miss Ream gave us poor art; but what gave her so much power? Plainly, that she was but a single feather. Congress being composed exclusively of men, the mere fact of her sex gave her an exceptional and dangerous influence. Fill a dozen of the seats in Congress with women, and that danger at least will be cancelled. The taste in art may be no better; but an artist will no more be selected for being a pretty girl than now for being a pretty boy. So in all such cases. Here, as everywhere, it is the advocate of woman suffrage who wishes to recognize the fact of sex, and guard against its perils.

It is precisely so in education. Believing boys and girls to be unlike, and yet seeing them to be placed by the Creator on the same planet and in the same family, we hold it safer to follow his method. As they are born to interest each other, to stimulate each other, to excite each other, it seems better to let this impulse work itself off in a natural way,—to let in upon it the fresh air and the daylight, instead of attempting to suppress and destroy it. In a mixed school, as in a family, the fact of sex presents itself as an unconscious, healthy, mutual stimulus. It is in the separate schools that the healthy relation vanishes, and the thought of

sex becomes a morbid and diseased thing. This observation first occurred to me when a pupil and a teacher in boys' boarding-schools years ago: there was such marked superiority as to sexual refinement in the day-scholars, who saw their sisters and the friends of their sisters every day. All later experience of our public-school system has confirmed this opinion. It is because I believe the distinction of sex to be momentous, that I dread to see the sexes educated apart.

The truth of the whole matter is, that Nature will have her rights—innocently if she can, guilty if she must; and it is a little amusing that the writer of an ingenious paper on the other side, called "Sex in Politics," in an able New York journal, puts our case better than I can put it, before he gets through, only that he is then speaking of wealth, not women: "Anybody who considers seriously what is meant by the conflict between labour and capital, of which we are only just witnessing the beginning, and what is to be done *to give money legitimately that influence on legislation which it now exercises illegitimately*, must acknowledge at once that the next generation will have a thorny path to travel." The Italics are my own. Precisely what this writer wishes to secure for money, we claim for the disfranchised half of the human race,—open instead of secret influence;

the English tradition instead of the French; women as rulers, not as kings' mistresses; women as legislators, not merely as lobbyists; women employing in legitimate form that power which they will otherwise illegitimately wield. This is all our demand.

LVII.

HOW WILL IT RESULT?

"IT would be a great convenience, my hearers," said old Parson Withington of Newbury, "if the moral of a fable could only be written at the beginning of it, instead of the end. But it never is." Commonly the only thing to be done is to get hold of a few general principles, hold to those, and trust that all will turn out well. No matter how thoroughly a reform may have been discussed,—negro emancipation or free trade, for instance,—it is a step in the dark at last, and the detailed results never turn out to be precisely according to the programme.

An "esteemed correspondent," who has written some of the best things yet said in America in behalf of the enfranchisement of woman, writes privately to express some solicitude, since, as she thinks, we are not ready for it yet. "I am con-

vinced," she writes, "of the abstract right of women to vote; but all I see of the conduct of the existing women, into whose hands this change would throw the power, inclines me to hope that this power will not be conceded till education shall have prepared a class of women fit to take the responsibilities."

Gradual emancipation, in short!—for fear of trusting truth and justice to take care of themselves. Who knew, when the negroes were set free, whether they would at first use their freedom well, or ill? Would they work? would they avoid crimes? would they justify their freedom? The theory of education and preparation seemed very plausible. Against that, there was only the plain theory which Elizabeth Heyrick first announced to England,—"Immediate, unconditional emancipation." "The best preparation for freedom is freedom." What was true of the negroes then is true of women now.

"The lovelier traits of womanhood," writes earnestly our correspondent, "simplicity, faith, guilelessness, unfit them to conduct public affairs, where one must deal with quacks and charlatans. . . . We are not all at once 'as gods, knowing good and evil;' and the very innocency of our lives, and the habits of pure homes, unfit us to manage a certain class who will flock to this standard."

But the basis of all republican government is in

the assumption that good is ultimately stronger than evil. If we once abandon this, our theory has gone to pieces, at any rate. If we hold to it, good women are no more helpless and useless than good men. The argument that would here disfranchise women has been used before now to disfranchise clergymen. I believe that in some States they are still disfranchised; and, if they are not, it is partly because good is found to be as strong as evil, after all, and partly because clergymen are not found to be so angelically good as to be useless. I am very confident that both these truths will be found to apply to women also.

Whatever else happens, we may be pretty sure that one thing will. The first step towards the enfranchisement of women will blow to the winds the tradition of the angelic superiority of women. Just as surely as women vote, we shall have occasionally women politicians, women corruptionists, and women demagogues. Conceding, for the sake of courtesy, that none such now exist, they will be born as instantaneously, after enfranchisement, as the frogs begin to pipe in the spring. Those who doubt it ignore human nature; and, if they are not prepared for this fact, they had better consider it in season, and take sides accordingly. In these pages, at least, they have been warned.

What then? Suppose women are not "as gods, knowing good and evil:" they are not to be emancipated as gods, but as fallible human beings. They are to come out of an ignorant innocence, that may be only weakness, into a wise innocence that will be strength. It is too late to remand American women into a Turkish or Jewish tutelage: they have emerged too far not to come farther. In a certain sense, no doubt, the butterfly is safest in the chrysalis. When the soft thing begins to emerge, the world certainly seems a dangerous place; and it is hard to say what will be the result of the emancipation. But when she is once half out, there is no safety for the pretty creature but to come the rest of the way, and use her wings.

LVIII.

"I HAVE ALL THE RIGHTS I WANT."

WHEN Dr. Johnson had published his English Dictionary, and was asked by a lady how he chanced to make a certain mistake that she pointed out, he answered, "Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance." I always feel disposed to make the same comment on the assertion of any woman that she has all the

rights she wants. For every woman is, or may be, or might have been, a mother. And when she comes to know that even now, in many parts of the Union, a married mother has no legal right to her child, I should think her tongue would cleave to her mouth before she would utter those foolish words again.

All the things I ever heard or read against slavery did not fix in my soul such a hostility to it as a single scene in a Missouri slave-market some twenty-five years ago. As I sat there, a purchaser came in to buy a little girl to wait on his wife. Three little sisters were brought in, from eight to twelve years old: they were mulattoes, with sweet, gentle manners; they had evidently been taken good care of, and their pink calico frocks were clean and whole. The gentleman chose one of them, and then asked her, good-naturedly enough, if she did not wish to go with him. She burst into tears, and said, "I would rather stay with my mother." But her tears were as powerless, of course, as so many salt drops from the ocean.

That was all. But all the horrors of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the stories told me by fugitive slaves, the scarred backs I afterwards saw by dozens among coloured recruits, did not impress me as did that hour in the gaol. The whole probable career of that poor, wronged, motherless, shrinking child passed

before me in fancy. It seemed to me that a man must be utterly lost to all manly instincts who would not give his life to overthrow such a system. It seemed to me that the woman who could tolerate, much less defend it, could not herself be true, could not be pure, or must be fearfully and grossly ignorant.

You acquiesce, fair lady. You say it was horrible indeed, but, thank God! it is past. Past? Is it so? Past, if you please, as to the law of slavery, but, as to the legal position of woman, still a fearful reality. It is not twelve years since a scene took place in a Boston court-room, before Chief Justice Chapman, which was worse, in this respect, than that scene in St. Louis, inasmuch as the mother was present when the child was taken away, and the wrong was sanctioned by the highest judicial officer of the State. Two little girls, who had been taken from their mother by their guardian, their father being dead, had taken refuge with her against his wishes; and he brought them into court under a writ of *habeas corpus*, and the court awarded them to him as against their mother. "The little ones were very much affected," says the *Boston Herald*, "by the result of the decision which separated them from their mother; and force was required to remove them from the court-room. The distress of the mother was also very evident."

There must have been some special reason, you say, for such a seeming outrage: she was a bad woman. No; she was "a lady of the highest respectability." No charge was made against her: but, being left a widow, she had married again; and for that, and that only, so far as appears, the court took from her the guardianship of her own children, —bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh, the children for whom she had borne the deepest physical agony of womanhood,—and awarded them to somebody else.

You say, "But her second husband might have misused the children." Might? So the guardian might, and that where they had no mother to protect them. Had the father been left a widower, he might have made a half-dozen successive marriages, have brought stepmother after stepmother to control these children, and no court could have interfered. The father is recognized before the law as the natural guardian of the children. The mother, even though she be left a widow, is not. The consequence is a series of outrages of which only a few scattered instances come before the public; just as in slavery, out of a hundred little girls sold away from their parents, only one case might ever be mentioned in any newspaper.

This case led to an alteration of the law in Massa-

chusetts, but the same thing might yet happen in some States of the Union. The possibility of a single such occurrence shows that there is still a fundamental wrong in the legal position of woman. And the fact that most women do not know it, only deepens the wrong—as Dr. Channing said of the contentment of the Southern slaves. The mass of men, even of lawyers, pass by such things, as they formerly passed by the facts of slavery.

There is no lasting remedy for these wrongs, except to give woman the political power to protect herself. There never yet existed a race, nor a class, nor a sex, which was noble enough to be trusted with political power over another sex, or class, or race. It is for self-defence that woman needs the ballot. And, in view of a single such occurrence as I have given, I charge that woman who professes to have "all the rights she wants," either with a want of all feeling of motherhood, or with "ignorance, madam pure ignorance."

LIX.

"NOT SENSE ENOUGH TO VOTE."

THERE is one special point on which men seem to me rather insincere toward women. When they speak to women, the objection made to their voting is usually that they are too angelic. But when men talk to each other, the general assumption is, that women should not vote because they have not brains enough—or, as old Theophilus Parsons wrote a century ago, have not "a sufficient acquired discretion."

It is an important distinction. Because, if women are too angelic to vote, they can only be fitted for it by becoming more wicked, which is not desirable. On the other hand, if there is no objection but the want of brains, then our public schools are equalizing that matter fast enough. Still, there are plenty of people who have never got beyond this objection. Listen to the first discussion that you encounter among men on this subject, wherever they may congregate. Does it turn upon the question of saintliness, or of brains? Let us see.

I travelled the other day upon the Boston and

Providence Railroad with a party of mechanics, mostly English and Scotch. They were discussing this very question, and, with the true English habit, thought it was all a matter of property. Without it a woman certainly should not vote, they said; but they all favoured, to my surprise, the enfranchisement of women of property. "As a general rule," said the chief speaker, "a woman that's got property has got sense enough to vote."

There it was! These foreigners, who had found their own manhood by coming to a land which not only the Pilgrim Fathers but the Pilgrim Mothers had settled, and subdued, and freed for them, were still ready to disfranchise most of the daughters of those mothers, on the ground that they had "not sense enough to vote." I thanked them for their blunt truthfulness, so much better than the flattery of most of the native born.

My other instance shall be a conversation overheard in a railway station near Boston, between two intelligent citizens, who had lately listened to Anna Dickinson. "The best of it was," said one, "to see our minister introduce her."—"Wonder what the Orthodox churches would have said to that ten years ago?" said the other. "Never mind," was the answer. "Things have changed. What I think is, it's all in the bringing up. If women were brought

up just as men are, they'd have just as much brains." (Brains again!) "That's what Beecher says. Boys are brought up to do business, and take care of themselves: that's where it is. Girls are brought up to dress and get married. Start 'em alike! That's what Beecher says. Start 'em alike, and see if girls haven't got just as much brains."

"Still harping on my daughter," and on the condition of her brains! It is on this that the whole question turns, in the opinion of many men. Ask ten men their objections to woman suffrage. One will plead that women are angels. Another fears discord in families. Another points out that women cannot fight—he himself being very likely a non-combatant. Another quotes St. Paul for this purpose—not being, perhaps, in the habit of consulting that authority on any other point. But with the others, very likely, every thing will turn on the question of brains. They believe, or think they believe, that women have not sense enough to vote. They may not say so to women, but they habitually say it to men. If you wish to meet the common point of view of masculine voters, you must find it here.

It is fortunate that it is so. Of all points, this is the easiest to settle; for every intelligent woman, even if she be opposed to woman suffrage, helps to settle it. Every good lecture by a woman, every

good book written by one, every successful business enterprise carried on helps to decide the question. Every class of girls that graduates from every good school helps to pile up the argument on this point. And the vast army of women, constituting nine out of ten of the teachers in our American schools, may appeal as logically to their pupils, and settle the argument based on brains. "If we had sense enough to educate you," they may say to each graduating class of boys, "we have sense enough to vote beside you."

LX.

THE ROB ROY THEORY.

The Saturday Review, in an article which denounces all equality in marriage laws and all plans of woman suffrage, admits frankly the practical obstacles in the way of the process of voting. "Possibly the presence of women as voters would tend still further to promote order than has been done by the ballot." It plants itself wholly on one objection, which goes far deeper, thus :—

"If men choose to say that women are not their equals, women have nothing to do but to give in. Physical force, the

ultimate basis of all society and all government, must be on the side of the men; and those who have the key of the position will not consent permanently to abandon it."

It is a great pleasure when an opponent of justice is willing to fall back thus frankly upon the Rob Roy theory:—

> "The good old rule
> Sufficeth him, the simple plan
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

It is easy, I think, to show that the theory is utterly false, and that the basis of civilized society is not physical force, but, on the contrary, brains.

In the city where *The Saturday Review* is published, there are three regiments of "Guards" which are the boast of the English army, and are believed by their officers to be the finest troops in the world. They have deteriorated in size since the Crimean war; but I believe that the men of one regiment still average six feet two inches in height; and I am sure that nobody ever saw them in line, without noticing the contrast between these magnificent men and the comparatively puny officers who command them. These officers are from the highest social rank in England, the governing classes; and, if it were the whole object of this military organization to give a visible proof of the utter absurdity of *The Saturday Review's* theory, it could not be better

done. There is no country in Europe, I suppose, where the hereditary aristocracy is physically equal to that of England, or where the intellectual class has so good a physique. But set either the House of Lords, or *The Saturday Review* contributors, upon a hand-to-hand fight against an equal number of "navvies" or "costermongers," and the patricians would have about as much chance as a crew of Vassar girls in a boat-race with Yale or Harvard. Take the men of England alone, and it is hardly too much to say that physical force, instead of being the basis of political power in any class, is apt to be found in inverse ratio to it. In case of revolution, the strength of the governing class in any country is not in its physical but in its mental power. Rank and money, and the power to influence and organize and command, are merely different modifications of mental training brought to bear by somebody.

In our country, without class distinctions, the same truth can be easily shown. Physical power lies mainly in the hands of the masses: wherever a class or profession possesses more than its numerical share of power, it has usually less than its proportion of physical vigour. This is easily shown from the vast body of evidence collected during our civil war. In the volume containing the medical statistics of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau, we have the

tabulated reports of about 600,000 persons subject to draft, and of about 500,000 recruits, substitutes, and drafted men ; showing the precise physical condition of more than a million men.

It appears that, out of the whole number examined, rather more than 257 in each 1,000 were found unfit for military service. It is curious to see how generally the physical power among these men is in inverse ratio to the social and political prominence of the class they represent. Out of 1,000 unskilled labourers, for instance, only 348 are physically disqualified ; among tanners, only 216 ; among iron-workers, 189. On the other hand, among lawyers, 544 out of 1,000 are disqualified ; among journalists, 740 ; among clergymen, 954. Grave divines are horrified at the thought of admitting women to vote, when they cannot fight ; though not one of twenty of their own number is fit for military duty, if he volunteered. Of the editors who denounce woman suffrage, only about one in four could himself carry a musket ; while, of the lawyers who fill Congress, the majority could not be defenders of their country, but could only be defended. If we were to distribute political power with reference to the "physical basis" which *The Saturday Review* talks about, it would be a wholly new distribution, and would put things more hopelessly upside down than did the

worst phase of the French Commune. If, then, a political theory so utterly breaks down when applied to men, why should we insist on resuscitating it in order to apply it to women? The truth is, that, as civilization advances, the world is governed more and more unequivocally by brains; and whether those brains are deposited in a strong body or a weak one becomes a matter of less and less importance. But it is only in the very first stage of barbarism that mere physical strength makes mastery; and the long head has controlled the long arm since the beginning of recorded time.

And it must be remembered that even these statistics very imperfectly represent the case. They do not apply to the whole male sex, but actually to the picked portion only, to the men presumed to be of military age, excluding the very old and the very young. Were these included, the proportion unfit for military duty would of course be far greater. Moreover, it takes no account of courage or cowardice, patriotism or zeal. How much all these considerations tell upon the actual proportion, may be seen from the fact, that in the town where I am writing, for instance, out of some twelve thousand inhabitants and about three thousand voters, there are only some three hundred who actually served in the civil war,—a number too small to exert a perceptible influence

on any local election. When we see the community yielding up its voting power into the hands of those who have actually done military service, it will be time enough to exclude women for not doing such service. If the alleged physical basis operates as an exclusion of all non-combatants, it should surely give a monopoly to the actual combatants.

LXI.

THE VOTES OF NON-COMBATANTS.

THE tendency of modern society is not to concentrate power in the hands of the few, but to give a greater and greater share to the many. Read Froissart's Chronicles, and Scott's novels of chivalry, and you will see how thoroughly the difference between patrician and plebeian was then a difference of physical strength. The knight, being better nourished and better trained, was apt to be the bodily superior of the peasant, to begin with; and this strength was re-enforced by armour, weapons, horse, castle, and all the resources of feudal warfare. With this greater strength went naturally the assumption of greater political power. To the heroes

of "Ivanhoe," or "The Fair Maid of Perth," it would have seemed as absurd that yeomen and lackeys should have any share in the government, as it would seem to the members in an American legislature that women should have any such share. In a contest of mailed knights, any number of unarmed men were but so many women. As Sir Philip Sidney said, "The wolf asketh not how many the sheep may be."

But time and advancing civilization have tended steadily in one direction. "He giveth power to the weak, and to them who have no might He increaseth strength." Every step in the extension of political rights has consisted in opening them to a class hitherto humbler. From kings to nobles, from nobles to burghers, from burghers to yeomen; in short, from strong to weak, from high to low, from rich to poor. All this is but the unconscious following out of one sure principle—that legislation is mainly for the protection of the weak against the strong, and that for this purpose the weak must be directly represented. The strong are already protected by their strength: it is the weak who need all the vantage-ground that votes and legislatures can give them. The feudal chiefs were stronger without laws than with them. "Take care of yourselves in Sutherland," was the anxious message of

the old Highlander: "the law has come as far as Tain." It was the peaceful citizen who needed the guaranty of law against brute force.

But can laws be executed without brute force? Not without a certain amount of it, but that amount under civilization grows less and less. Just in proportion as the masses are enfranchised, statutes execute themselves without crossing bayonets. "In a republic," said De Tocqueville, "if laws are not always respectable, they are always respected." If every step in freedom has brought about a more peaceable state of society, why should that process stop at this precise point? Besides, there is no possibility in nature of a political division in which all the men shall be on one side and all the women on the other. The mutual influence of the sexes forbids it. The very persons who hint at such a fear refute themselves at other times, by arguing that "women will always be sufficiently represented by men," or that "every woman will vote as her husband thinks, and it will merely double the numbers." As a matter of fact, the law will prevail in all English-speaking nations: a few men fighting for it will be stronger than many fighting against it; and, if those few have both the law and the women on their side, there will be no trouble.

The truth is, that, in this age, *cedant arma togæ:*

it is the civilian who rules on the throne or behind it, and who makes the fighting-men his mere agents. Yonder policeman at the corner looks big and formidable: he protects the women, and overawes the boys. But away in some corner of the City Hall, there is some quiet man, out of uniform, perhaps a consumptive or a dyspeptic or a cripple, who can overawe the burliest policeman by his authority as city marshal or as mayor. So an army is but a larger police; and its official head is that plain man at the White House, who makes or unmakes, not merely brevet-brigadiers, but major-generals in command,—who can by the stroke of the pen convert the most powerful man of the army into the most powerless. Take away the occupant of the position, and put in a woman, and will she become impotent because her name is Elizabeth or Maria Theresa? It is brains that more and more govern the world; and whether those brains be on the throne, or at the ballot-box, they will soon make the owner's sex a subordinate affair. If woman is also strong in the affections, so much the better. "Win the hearts of your subjects," said Lord Burleigh to Queen Elizabeth, "and you will have their hands and purses."

War is the last appeal, and happily in these days the rarest appeal, of statesmanship. In the multifarious other duties that make up statesmanship, we

cannot spare the brains, the self-devotion, and the enthusiasm, of woman. One of the most important treaties of modern history, the Peace of Cambray, in 1529, was negotiated, after previous attempts had failed, by two women,—Margaret, aunt of Charles V., and Louisa, mother of Francis I. Voltaire said that Christina of Sweden was the only sovereign of her time who maintained the dignity of the throne against Mazarin and Richelieu. Frederick the Great said that the Seven Years' War was waged against three women,—Elizabeth of Russia, Maria Theresa, and Mme. Pompadour. There is nothing impotent in the statesmanship of women when they are admitted to exercise it: they are only powerless for good when they are obliged to obtain by wheedling and flattery a sway that should be recognized, responsible, and limited.

LXII.

KILKENNY CAT ARGUMENTS.

IT always helps a good cause when its opponents are in the position of the famous Kilkenny cats, and mutually eat each other up. In the anti-slavery movement, it was justly urged that the slaves might possibly be (as slaveholders alleged) a race of petted

children, whose hearts could not possibly be alienated from their masters; or they might be (as was also alleged by slaveholders) a race of fiends, whom a whisper could madden: but they could not well be both. Every claim that the negro was happy was stultified by that other claim, that the South was dwelling on a barrel of gunpowder, and that the mildest anti-slavery tract meant fire and explosion. The twin arguments saved abolitionists a great deal of trouble. Either by itself would have required an answer; but the two answered each other—devoured each other, in fact, like the Kilkenny cats.

So, whenever the advocates of woman suffrage are assailed on the ground that women are too superstitious, and will, if enfranchised, be governed by religion and the Church alone, there is always sure to come in some obliging advocate with his "Besides, the tendency of the movement is to utter lawlessness, to the destruction of religion, the marriage-vows, the home"—and all the rest of it. The boy in the story is hardly more self-contradictory, when, in answer to his friend's appeal for his jack-knife, he replies, "I haven't any. Besides, I want to use it."

Here, for instance, is Mr. Nathan N. Withington of Newbury, Mass., who in an address on woman suffrage, while waiving many arguments against it,

plants himself strongly on the ground that it must be fatal to the family. "No one whose opinion is worth reckoning, with whom I have talked on the matter, ever denied entirely that the logical result of the movement was what is called free love." My inference would be, in passing, that my old neighbour Mr. Withington must confine himself to a very narrow circle, in the way of conversation; or, that he must find nobody's opinion "worth reckoning" if it differs from his own. Certainly I have talked with hardly an advocate of woman suffrage in New England who would not deny entirely—and with a good deal of emphasis—any such assumptions as he here makes. But let that go: the subject has already been discussed far more than its intrinsic importance required; and convention after convention has taken unnecessary pains to refute a charge more baseless than the slaveholders' fears of insurrection. What I wish to point out is, that such charges have, in one way, great value: they precisely neutralize and utterly annihilate the equally baseless terror of "Too superstitious."

If it is true, as is sometimes alleged, that women are constitutionally under the dominion of religion and the Church, then it is pretty sure that, under these auspices, the moral restraints of the community, as marriage and the home, will be maintained. If it

is true on the other hand, as Mr. Withington honestly thinks, that the tendency of woman suffrage is to create a deluge that shall sweep away the home, then it is certain that all vestiges of churchly superstition will be swamped in the process. The logical outcome of the movement may be, if you please, to establish the Spanish Inquisition or to bring back the horrors of the French Revolution, but it seems clear that it cannot simultaneously bring both. The advocates of both theories are equally sincere, doubtless, in their predictions of alarm; but one set of alarmists or the other set of alarmists must be woefully disappointed when the time comes. And, if either, why not both?

The simple fact is, that whosoever draws upon his imagination for possible disasters from any particular measure, has a great fund at his disposal, whether he looks right or left. He has always this advantage over the practical reformer, that whereas the claims of the reformer are, or should be, definite, coherent, practical, the opponent can, if he wishes, have the whole cloudy domain of possibility to draw upon: he can marshal an army in the atmosphere, while the practical reformer must stay on earth. It is a comfort when two of these nebulous armies of imaginary obstacles fight in the air, as in the present case, like the shadowy hosts in Kaulbach's great cartoon; and so destroy one another, bringing back clear sky.

Woman needs the ballot for self-respect and self-protection, and to do her share for the education and moral safety of the children she bears. This is enough to begin with. In seeking after this we have firm foothold. The old Eastern fable describes a certain man as finding a horseshoe. His neighbour soon begins to weep and wail, because, as he justly points out, the man who has found a horseshoe may some day find a horse, and may shoe him ; and the neighbour's child may some day go so near the horse's heels as to be kicked, and die ; and then the two families may quarrel and fight, and several valuable lives be lost through that finding of a horseshoe. The gradual advancement of women must meet many fancies as far-fetched as this, and must see them presented as arguments ; and we must be very grateful if they prove Kilkenny cat arguments, and destroy one another.

LXIII.

DANGEROUS VOTERS.

ONE of the few plausible objections brought against women's voting is this : that it would demoralize the suffrage by letting in very dangerous voters ; that virtuous women would not vote, and vicious women would. It is a very unfounded alarm.

For, in the first place, our institutions rest—if they have any basis at all—on this principle, that good is stronger than evil, that the majority of men really wish to vote rightly, and that only time and patience are needed to get the worst abuses righted. How any one can doubt this, who watches the course of our politics, I do not see. In spite of the great disadvantage of having masses of ignorant foreign voters to deal with,—and of native black voters, who have been purposely kept in ignorance,—we certainly see wrongs gradually righted, and the truth by degrees prevail. Even the one great exceptional case of New York City has been reached at last; and the very extent of the evil has brought its own cure. Now, why should this triumph of good over evil be practicable among men, and not apply to women also?

It must be either because women, as a class, are worse than men,—which will hardly be asserted,—or because, for some special reason, bad women have an advantage over good women such as has no parallel in the other sex. But I do not see how this can be. Let us consider.

It is certain that good women are not less faithful and conscientious than good men. It is generally admitted that those most opposed to suffrage will very soon, on being fully enfranchised, feel it their

duty to vote. They may at first misuse the right through ignorance, but they certainly will not shirk it. It is this conscientious habit on which I rely without fear. Never yet, when public duty required, have American women failed to meet the emergency; and I am not afraid of it now. Moreover, when they are once enfranchised, and their votes are needed, all the men who now oppose or ridicule the demand for suffrage will begin to help them to exercise it. When the wives are once enfranchised, you may be sure that the husbands will not neglect those of their own household: they will provide them with ballots, vehicles, and policemen, and will contrive to make the voting-places pleasanter than many parlours, and quieter than some churches.

On the other hand, it seems altogether probable that the very worst women, so far from being ostentatious in their wickedness upon election day, will, on the contrary, so disguise and conceal themselves as to deceive the very elect, and, if it were possible, the very policemen. For whatever party they may vote, they will contribute to make the voting-places as orderly as railway stations. These covert ways are the very habit of their lives, at least by daylight; and the women who have of late done the most conspicuous and open mischief in our community have done it, not in their true character as evil,

but, on the contrary, under a mask of elevated purpose.

That women, when they vote, will commit their full share of errors, I have always maintained. But that they will collectively misuse their power, seems to me out of the question; and that the good women are going to stay at home, and let bad women do the voting, appears quite as incredible. In fact, if they do thus, it is a fair question whether the epithets "good" and "bad" ought not, politically speaking, to change places. For it naturally occurs to every one, on election day, that the man who votes, even if he votes wrong, is really a better man, so far as political duties go, than the very loftiest saint who stays at home and prays that other people may vote right. And it is hard to see why it should be otherwise with women.

LXIV.

HOW WOMEN WILL LEGISLATE.

IT is often said, that, when women vote, their votes will make no difference in the count, because they will merely duplicate the votes of their husbands and brothers. Then these same objectors go on and

predict all sorts of evil things, for which women will vote, quite apart from their husbands and brothers. Moreover, the evils thus predicted are apt to be diametrically opposite. Thus Goldwin Smith predicts that women will be governed by priests, and then goes on to predict that women will vote to abolish marriage; not seeing that, as Professor Cairnes has pointed out, these two predictions destroy each other.

On the other hand, I think that the advocates of woman suffrage often err by claiming too much,—as that all women will vote for peace, for total abstinence, against slavery, and the rest. It seems better to rest the argument on general principles, and not to seek to prophesy too closely. The only thing which I feel safe in predicting is, that woman suffrage will be used, as it should be, for the protection of woman. Self-respect and self-protection,—these are, as has been already said, the two great things for which woman needs the ballot.

It is not the nature of things, I take it, that a class politically subject can obtain justice from the governing class. Not the least of the benefits gained by political equality for the coloured people of the South is, that the laws now generally make no difference of colour in penalties for crime. In slavery times there were dozens of crimes which were punished

more severely by the statute if committed by a slave or a free negro, than if done by a white. I feel very sure that under the reign of impartial suffrage we should see fewer such announcements as this, which I cut from a late New York *Evening Express* :—

"Last night Capt. Lowery, of the Twenty-seventh Precinct, made a descent upon the dance-house in the basement of 96, Greenwich Street, and arrested fifty-two men and eight women. The entire batch was brought before Justice Flammer, at the Tombs Police Court, this morning. Louise Maud, the proprietress, was held in five hundred dollars bail to answer at the Court of General Sessions. *The fifty-two men were fined three dollars each, all but twelve paying at once; and the eight women were fined ten dollars each, and sent to the Island for one month.*"

The Italics are my own. When we reflect that this dance-house, whatever it was, was unquestionably sustained for the gratification of men, rather than of women; when we consider that every one of these fifty-two men came there, in all probability, by his own free will, and to spend money, not to earn it; and that the undoubted majority of the women were driven there by necessity or betrayal, or force or despair, — it would seem that even an equal punishment would have been cruel injustice to the women. But when we observe how trifling a penalty was three dollars each to these men, whose money was sure to go for riotous living in some form, and forty of whom had the amount of the fine in their

pockets; and how hopelessly large an amount was ten dollars each to women who did not, probably, own even the clothes they wore, and who were to be sent to prison for a month in addition,—we see a kind of injustice which would stand a fair chance of being righted, I suspect, if women came into power. Not that they would punish their own sex less severely; probably they would not; but they would put men more on a level as to the penalty.

It may be said that no such justice is to be expected from women; because women in what is called "society" condemn women for mere imprudence, and excuse men for guilt. But it must be remembered, that in "society" guilt is rarely a matter of open proof and conviction, in case of men: it is usually a matter of surmise; and it is easy for either love or ambition to set the surmise aside, and to assume that the worst reprobate is "only a little wild." In fact, as Margaret Fuller pointed out years ago, how little conception has a virtuous woman as to what a dissipated young man really is! But let that same woman be a Portia, in the judgment-seat, or even a legislator or a voter, and let her have the unmistakable and actual offender before her, and I do not believe that she will excuse him for a paltry fine, and give the less guilty woman a penalty more than quadruple.

Women will also be sure to bring special sympathy and intelligent attention to the wrongs of children. Who can read without shame and indignation this report from *The New York Herald?*

THE CHILD-SELLING CASE.

Peter Hallock, committed on a charge of abducting Lena Dinser, a young girl thirteen years old, whom, it was alleged, her father, George Dinser, had sold to Hallock for purposes of prostitution, was again brought yesterday before Judge Westbrook, in the Supreme Court Chambers, on the writ of *habeas corpus* previously obtained by Mr. William F. Howe, the prisoner's counsel. Mr. Howe claimed that Hallock could not be held on either section of the statute for abduction. Under the first section the complaint, he insisted, should set forth that the child was taken contrary to the wish and against the consent of her parents. On the contrary, the evidence, he urged, showed that the father was a willing party. Under the second section, it was contended that the prisoner could not be held, as there was no averment that the girl was of previous chaste character. Judge Westbrook, a brief counter argument having been made by Mr. Dana, held that the points of Mr. Howe were well taken, and ordered the prisoner's discharge.

Here was a father, who, as the newspapers allege, had previously sold two other daughters, body and soul, and against whom the evidence seemed to be in this case clear. Yet through the defectiveness of the statute, or the remissness of the prosecuting attorney, he goes free, without even a trial, to carry on his infamous traffic for other children. Grant that the

points were technically well taken and irresistible,—though this is by no means certain,—it is very sure that there should be laws that should reach such atrocities with punishment, whether the father does or does not consent to his child's ruin ; and that public sentiment should compel prosecuting officers to be as careful in framing their indictments where human souls are at stake as where the question is of dollars only. It is upon such matters that the influence of women will make itself felt in legislation.

LXV.

DEFEATS BEFORE VICTORIES.

AFTER one of the early defeats in the War of the Rebellion, the commander of a Massachusetts regiment wrote home to his father : "I wish people would not write us so many letters of condolence. Our defeat seemed to trouble them much more than it troubles us. Did people suppose there were to be no ups and downs? We expect to lose plenty of battles, but we have enlisted for the war."

It is just so with every successful reform. While

enemies and half-friends are proclaiming its defeats, those who advocate it are rejoicing that they have at last got an army into the field to be defeated. Unless this war is to be an exception to all others, even the fact of having joined battle is a great deal. It is the first step. Defeat first; a good many defeats, if you please: victory by-and-by.

William Wilberforce, writing to a friend in the year 1817, said, "I continue faithful to the measure of Parliamentary reform brought forward by Mr. Pitt. I am firmly persuaded that at present a prodigious majority of the people of this country are adverse to the measure. In my view, so far from being an objection to the discussion, this is rather a recommendation." In 1832 the Reform Bill was passed.

In the first Parliamentary debate on the slave-trade, Col. Tarleton, who boasted to have killed more men than any one in England, pointing to Wilberforce and others, said, "The inspiration began on that side of the house;" then turning round, "The revolution has reached to this also, and reached to the height of fanaticism and frenzy." The first vote in the House of Commons, in 1790, after arguments in the affirmative by Wilberforce, Pitt, Fox, and Burke, stood, ayes, 88; noes, 163: majority against the measure, 75. In 1807 the slave-trade

was abolished, and in 1834 slavery in the British colonies followed; and even on the very night when the latter bill passed, the abolitionists were taunted by Gladstone, the great Demarara slaveholder, with having toiled for forty years and done nothing. The Roman Catholic Relief Bill, establishing freedom of thought in England, had the same experience. It passed in 1829 by a majority of a hundred and three in the House of Lords, which had nine months before refused by a majority of forty-five to take up the question at all.

The English corn-laws went down a quarter of a century ago, after a similar career of failures. In 1840, there were hundreds of thousands in England who thought that to attack the corn-laws was to attack the very foundations of society. Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister, said in Parliament, that "he had heard of many mad things in his life, but, before God, the idea of repealing the corn-laws was the very maddest thing of which he had ever heard." Lord John Russell counselled the House to refuse to hear evidence on the operation of the corn-laws. Six years after, in 1846, they were abolished for ever.

How Wendell Phillips, in the anti-slavery meetings, used to lash pro-slavery men with such formidable facts as these,—and to quote how Clay and Calhoun and Webster and Everett had pledged themselves

that slavery should never be discussed, or had proposed that those who discussed it should be imprisoned,—while, in spite of them all, the great reform was moving on, and the abolitionists were forcing politicians and people to talk, like Sterne's starling, nothing but slavery!

We who were trained in the light of these great agitations have learned their lesson. We expect to march through a series of defeats to victory. The first thing is, as in the anti-slavery movement, so to arouse the public mind as to make this the central question. Given this prominence, and it is enough for this year or for many years to come. Wellington said that there was no such tragedy as a victory, except a defeat. On the other hand, the next best thing to a victory is a defeat, for it shows that the armies are in the field. Without the unsuccessful attempt of to-day, no success to-morrow.

When Mrs. Frances Anne Kemble came to this country, she was amazed to find Americans celebrating the battle of Bunker Hill, which she had always heard claimed as a victory for King George. Such it was doubtless called; but what we celebrated was the fact that the Americans there threw up breastworks, stood their ground, fired away their ammunition,—and were defeated. And thus the

reformer, looking at his failures, often sees in them such a step forward, that they are the Bunker Hill of a new revolution. Give us plenty of such defeats, and we can afford to wait a score of years for the victories. They will come.

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